

Price of a barrel of petroleum

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INSIDE TODAY

U.S. NEWS

PONZI SCHEME



Billionaire R. Allen Stanford is escorted into the federal courthouse Thursday, June 25, 2009, in Houston. Stanford faces federal charges that he ran a \$7 billion scheme to defraud investors with his international banking empire.

See U.S. News Page 5

SPORTS NEWS

SHAQUILLELAND



In this April 3, 2009 photo, Phoenix Suns center Shaquille O'Neal runs up the court against the Sacramento Kings during the first quarter of an NBA basketball game in Phoenix. The Cleveland Cavaliers are close to acquiring O'Neal in a trade that would pair him with MVP LeBron James, two people with knowledge of the deal told The Associated Press on Thursday, June 25, 2009.

See Sports Today Page 10

Michael Jackson dies in LA hospital

By NEKESA MUMBI MOODY and DERRIK J. LANG, Associated Press Writers

LOS ANGELES – Michael Jackson, the moonwalking former child star who became known the world over as the “King of Pop” before his life and career deteriorated in a freakish series of scandals, died Thursday, a person with knowledge of the situation told The Associated Press. He was 50. The person said Jackson died in a Los Angeles hospital. The person was not authorized to speak publicly and requested anonymity.

The circumstances of his death were not immediately clear. Jackson was not breathing when Los Angeles Fire Department paramedics responded to a call at his Los Angeles home about 12:30 p.m., Capt. Steve Ruda told the Los Angeles Times. The paramedics performed CPR and took him to UCLA Medical Center, Ruda told the newspaper.

Jackson's death brought a tragic end to a long, bizarre, sometimes farcical decline from his peak in the 1980s, when he was popular music's premier all-around performer, a uniter of black and white music who shattered the race barrier on MTV, dominated the charts and dazzled even more on stage.

He was perhaps the most exciting performer of his generation, known for his feverish, crotch-grabbing dance moves, his high-pitched voice punctuated with squeals and titters. His single sequined glove and tight, military-style jacket were trademarks second only to his ever-changing, surgically altered appearance. Over the years, his skin became lighter and his nose narrower.

Continued on Page B15



FILE - In this Aug. 29, 1993 file photo, pop singer Michael Jackson performs during his 'Dangerous' concert in National Stadium, Singapore.

(AP Photo/C.F. Tham, file)



Joal Ryan

Los Angeles – The 1970s did not lack for sex symbols. That, the ubiquitous Farrah Fawcett poster made sure of.

Fawcett, the feather-haired founding member of TV's Charlie's Angels and pinup icon whose second act was marked by bids to showcase her acting chops and whose third act was marred by on- and offscreen problems, died this morning at a Los Angeles-area hospital, some two-and-a-half years after being diagnosed with anal cancer. She was 62.

The actress passed away at 9:28 a.m. Ryan O'Neal, Fawcett's longtime leading man, and friend Alana Stewart were with her

Farrah Fawcett, First Among Angels, Has Died

at St. John's Health Center in Santa Monica, per a rep at Rogers & Cowan, Fawcett's publicity firm.

In an interview to air tonight on 20/20, O'Neal said he'd recently proposed to the ailing Fawcett, and that she'd accepted. The Love Story actor sounded certain the longtime unmarrieds would—finally—tie the knot.

“We will, as soon as she can say yes,” O'Neal said. “Maybe we can just nod her head.”

They never made it.

Fawcett, who in recent months had stopped receiving cancer treatment, talked frankly about her battle in Farrah's Story, a raw, camcorder-shot documentary that aired in May on NBC.

“I know that everyone will die eventually, but I do not want to die of this disease,” Fawcett said in the film.

“I want to stay alive.”

Continued on Page 16



CHOCOLATE, CARAMEL AND COOKIE
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PALM BEACH - The world's most famous escaped convict has a home on Aruba. Called 'Papillon', the nickname of prisoner Henri Charrière, it is a truly elegant restaurant version of his prison. The biggest difference, however, is that superb food is served at Papillon. On Saturday, June

27th, Papillon is the place to be, celebrating all the good things in life, in freedom. The evening's theme is 'Escape to Papillon', the dress code is 'stunning' and the subtitle is 'You give me butterflies'. You do the math....

Papillon means butterfly

in French, and butterflies are expected to swirl, dip and dance at The Butterfly Farm, where the evening starts off with a champagne toast. Laurent-Perrier's finest Brut is poured, a perfectly balanced, crisp champagne, made predominantly from Chardonnay grapes. Its finesse enhances the elegant hors d'oeuvres that will be served. After the reception at The Butterfly Farm, guests are transported in style by a Hummer Limousine to the red carpet at Papillon Restaurant



at The Village, across from the Radisson Resort., where owners Peter Ballière and Werner Vennen will be present to greet everyone personally.

Guests then sit down to a five-course culinary experience, which tantalizes, teases and

delights the taste buds. Top chef Griet VandenBrabant is going all-out for this Escape, which is accompanied by Laurent-Perrier Demi Sec, Cuvée Rosé Brut and Grand Siècle.

Transportation to The Butterfly Farm is of course by the Hummer limousine courtesy of The Village, hopefully on wings!

Sponsors of the elegant affair at Papillon Restaurant are Laurent-Perrier and Romar Trading, The Butterfly Farm, the Hummer Limousine Service, Bersah, Flora and The Village. Seats are limited, so do not wait too long to call. Reservations for attending the cocktail party at The Butterfly Farm are also possible. □





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Gol to Add Caribbean Flights, Expand Across Brazil

By **Fabiola Moura and Heloiza Canassa**

Gol Linhas Aereas Inteligentes SA, Brazil's second-largest airline, is adding routes to the Caribbean and smaller domestic cities while scaling back flights in the rest of South America as demand slows, Chief Executive Officer Constantino de Oliveira Jr. said.

"The flow between Brazil and South America had a noticeable reduction," Oliveira said in an interview today in New York. "The Brazilian market is the biggest driver of growth in South America."

Gol, based in Sao Paulo, will start flights next month to Punta Cana in the Dominican Republic and the islands of Curacao and Aruba in the

Netherlands Antilles. The airline also plans to begin operations to the Brazilian cities of Bauru, about 300 kilometers (187 miles) west of Sao Paulo, as well as Aracatuba and Montes Claros.

Oliveira said Gol is reorganizing its routes after posting losses every quarter last year because of costs related to the takeover of Varig in March 2007, and the more than doubling of oil prices between the acquisition and July 2008. Gol, which already dropped flights to Europe and North America, suspended its flights to Lima, the capital of Peru, and reduced the frequency of its flights to Santiago, Chile, he said.

'Mistakes'
"We made some mistakes,

or the situation changed, for example, in international flights," Oliveira said. "So we backed out and focused more in the domestic market."

Oliveira was in New York to meet investors and ring the closing bell of the New York Stock Exchange on the fifth anniversary of Gol's initial public offering.

Gol fell 1.1 percent to 10.68 reais in Sao Paulo trading. Its shares have climbed 7.8 percent this year compared with a 32 percent rise for Brazil's benchmark Bovespa stock index and 4 percent

gain for the airline's bigger Brazilian rival, Tam SA.

The airline recently agreed with Chicago-based Boeing Co. to postpone the delivery of "some" planes to between 2011 and 2014 from the planned 2010 to 2011, Oliveira said.

"We noticed today we have space to increase usage of our fleet," he said.

Gol expects to report profits this year after shifting routes and offering additional services, such as selling food on board and enabling passengers to reserve hotels,

rent cars and buy insurance on its Web site as a way to diversify revenue sources and keep fares low, Oliveira said.

The number of "economically active" Brazilians, or those who work and earn money, grew to 90 million from 60 million in the last few years, he said. Among those, 15 million travel by airplane, Oliveira said.

"It is a market that can double its size every four, five years, but this depends, of course, on the economy in general and on our capacity to keep demand stimulated," he said. □

MAN Diesel Builds Wind-Diesel Hybrid Facility in Bonaire

MAN Diesel, in collaboration with wind turbine manufacturer Enercon and planning and consulting firm Econcern, has said that it is building a wind-diesel hybrid power generation facility on the Caribbean island of Bonaire in the Netherlands Antilles. The facility comprises a wind park with 12 wind turbines and a biodiesel power plant that will produce power with five MAN diesel engines of type 9L27/38.

The hybrid facility will function as an independent base load power plant from the end of 2009 onwards, supplying the entire island with a total of 25MW of eco-friendly energy.

The value of the order for MAN Diesel is over E15 million. The customer is Water en Energie Bedrijf Bonaire (WEB), the state-run energy provider in the Netherlands Antilles.

While the 12 wind turbines are positioned on the north coast of Bonaire, the associated biodiesel power plant is situated around 10km further to the south west.

Stephan Mey, head of the power plants business unit at MAN Diesel, said: "Generating electricity with wind or solar energy is easy wherever the electricity can be fed into a major network. As a sole source of energy, like it is here on the islands, for instance, neither solar nor wind farms are able to deliver a sufficiently constant supply of energy." □



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Country status date to be set in September

~ No Parliamentary elections next year ~

By Alita Singh

WILLEMSTAD--An official date for attainment of country status for St. Maarten and Curaçao will be set in September when the Political Steering Group (PSG) meets again. This date is expected to be no later than October 2010.

The date chosen will reflect the islands' readiness to take up completely the responsibilities of being countries. In the case of Curaçao, this will be somewhat easier because it will inherit the Central Government apparatus, while St. Maarten now has to build and establish new departments and agencies.

The September meeting to set the date was decided Wednesday afternoon at the end of the latest PSG meeting held in Plaza Hotel, Curaçao. In the PSG meeting, all Kingdom parties decided that there is no need for a parliamentary election next

year and the focus should be on the dismantling of the Netherlands Antilles into the two new countries and the BES islands Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba into public entities of the Netherlands.

St. Maarten was applauded by its partners – the Dutch, Central and Curacao Governments – for continuing the process with a united force with former constitutional affairs commissioner Island Councilwoman Sarah Wescot-Williams as part of the delegation headed by new Constitutional Affairs Commissioner William Marlin. Finance Commissioner Xavier Blackman was also a delegation member.

Setting a date

The Dutch Government has shied away from commitment to any date in the past. The departure from this position by Dutch State Secretary for Kingdom Relations Ank Bijleveld-Schouten agreeing

to set a date in September came because the Dutch Government believes the process has progressed to a point where this is possible.

After ratifying the decision list of this week's PSG meeting, Bijleveld-Schouten said an indication of this was the completion of all Consensus Kingdom Laws and the pending handling of these in the Kingdom Council of Ministers on July 3.

Country, not 'entity'

Constitutional Affairs Commissioner William Marlin said St. Maarten's people could rest assured that St. Maarten would become a country and could look forward to a date for this transition to be set in September.

"Nine years and one day later, we can say that St. Maarten will become a country, not [a public entity of the Netherlands] with big letters or capital letters. St. Maarten will become a country by October

or maybe slightly before." The ninth anniversary of the 2000 referendum was marked on Tuesday, June 23.

For St. Maarten to be granted the status of country within the Dutch Kingdom, the criteria set in PSG meetings and Round Table Conference discussions must be met. This includes putting in place entities such as a gaming control board, among others.

St. Maarten should be given preferential treatment as it continues to prepare to take up the mantle as a country, but it has to build many of its departments and agencies from scratch, Marlin said. Curaçao will inherit from the Central Government and the BES islands will be taken care of by the Netherlands.

Requesting help

While it has been continuously said during the constitutional change process that St. Maarten is ready to become a country, it must be realised that this is true on paper in most instances, but the actual physical structures still have to be put in place and the necessary human resources need to be found, Marlin pointed out.

Accomplishing this is a hefty task, because St. Maarten has neither all the needed expertise nor the physical structures available, he said, adding that this was why the agreement signed by the Central Government and St. Maarten on Tuesday to set up branches of departments and agencies in St. Maarten was crucial.

A similar agreement was signed by Marlin and Bijleveld-Schouten Wednesday that will see the Dutch Government working closely with St. Maarten in July to ascertain what expertise is needed for its existing and future departments.

Marlin said help was needed and had been requested, and this had resulted in commitments from the Central and Dutch Governments. These agreements will birth the first vestiges of a country which has been primarily on paper so far. The public will see the setting up of offices

or the expansion of services in departments and agencies overseen by the Central Government in St. Maarten.

The committee to oversee unusual financial transactions MOT will be the first agency to be set up in St. Maarten in early July. Curaçao is already home to the MOT Antilles and will take this over when it becomes a country in the kingdom, while St. Maarten has to build its own.

Working together

Bijleveld-Schouten encouraged all partners to continue working together closely on a local level and to be prepared to look at the big picture when all parties sit together as the process continues. She, like Antillean Prime Minister Emily de Jongh-Elhage and Curaçao Constitutional Affairs Commissioner Zita Jesus-Leito, expressed satisfaction with the inclusion of Wescot-Williams in the St. Maarten delegation.

Marlin said that when the National Alliance (NA) had been in opposition, the party had been committed to Team St. Maarten. "St. Maarten has always had a team. We were together even when we [NA] were in opposition. We are happy to see Team St. Maarten is still intact" with Wescot-Williams on board.

Breakthrough

Sitting second chair for the first time since the constitutional process started just over nine years ago, Wescot-Williams, now leader of the opposition, said the commitment of the Dutch Government to the setting of a date was a breakthrough.

She said, "Step by step we are getting there" and another significant step would be the changing of the Kingdom Charter to reflect the new countries of St. Maarten and Curaçao.

All parties came with their sights set on establishing a date for the attainment of country status in Wednesday's meeting. While this was not accomplished, the agreement to set one in September is indeed progress, she said. □

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Wall Street rallies on Bernanke relief, consumer shares

By Caroline Valetkevitch

NEW YORK (Reuters) – Stocks rallied on Thursday as investors were relieved Fed Chairman Ben Bernanke withstood a barrage of pointed questions from Congress on the Bank of America-Merrill Lynch deal relatively unscathed.

Retailers and home builders led stocks higher for much of the session, helped by a surprising profit increase from retailer Bed Bath & Beyond Inc (BBBY.O). Energy companies' shares also rose as oil prices climbed above \$70 a barrel.

Stocks extended gains shortly before midday as investors took Bernanke's hearing in stride. Despite lawmakers' criticisms of Bernanke, the Fed chairman is well liked on Wall Street and most analysts anticipate he will be reappointed.

The U.S. House of Representatives Oversight and Government Reform Committee questioned Bernanke on the Fed's role in Bank of America's takeover of Merrill Lynch, and whether he pressured Bank of America's CEO Ken Lewis to go through with the deal after Lewis raised objections.

"There was concern as to what might happen there. He seemed to give some pretty decent testimony; at least it didn't get out of hand," said Bucky Hellwig, senior vice president at Morgan Asset Management, in Birmingham, Alabama.

The Dow Jones industrial average (.DJI) jumped 172.54 points, or 2.08 percent, to 8,472.40, snapping a four-day losing streak. The Standard & Poor's 500 Index (.SPX) gained 19.32 points, or 2.14 percent, to 920.26. The Nasdaq Composite Index (.IXIC) advanced 37.20 points, or 2.08 percent, to 1,829.54.

With the second quarter ending early next week, some portfolio managers have already begun their end-of-quarter "window dressing" of selling some shares with big losses and buying some of the quarter's best-performing stocks to help improve their returns. This Wall Street ritual

also is likely to have helped ignite Thursday's rally.

The S&P 500 is up 36 percent from a 12-year closing low hit on March 9.

Another sign that encouraged investors was news the Federal Reserve was scaling back some emergency funding programs even while extending a number of others. "What we saw is an improvement here in that one program went away, but also the flexibility that these other ones are staying around in case they're needed," Hellwig said.

PALM POPS UP AFTER THE BELL

After the close, Palm Inc (PALM.O) shares rose 10.2 percent to \$15.45 after the smartphone maker posted a narrower-than-expected loss despite a steep revenue decline.

On Nasdaq, Palm added 0.6 percent to close at \$14.02 ahead of the results.

During the regular session, shares of energy companies gained, including Exxon Mobil Corp (XOM.N), up 2.1 percent at \$69.88. Oil jumped \$1.56 to end at \$70.23.

Also boosting the market was home builder Lennar Corp (LEN.N), which posted a wider quarterly loss, but noted an increase in new home sales and orders. Its stock shot up 17.5 percent to \$9.19.

The Dow Jones U.S. home construction index (.DJUSHB) jumped 5.9 percent.

Gains in home builders and retailers point to signs of strength in consumer spending, which could be a boon for stocks just as the second-quarter earnings reporting period gets under way.

In the retail sector, Bed Bath & Beyond reported a surprising increase in quarterly profit as

it cut costs to offset slumping demand, and its stock gained 9.5 percent to \$31.08. The S&P retail index (.RLX) climbed 3.8 percent.

Another bright spot among retailers was J.C. Penney Co Inc (JCP.N), up 6 percent at \$28.20 after JPMorgan raised its rating on the stock to "overweight" from "neutral." Trading volume was below average on the New York Stock Exchange, with about 1.23 billion shares changing hands, below last year's estimated daily average of 1.49 billion, while on Nasdaq, about 2.28 billion shares traded, matching last year's



A trader works the floor of the New York Stock Exchange June 23, 2009.

REUTERS/Eric Thayer

daily average. Advancing stocks outnumbered declining ones on both the NYSE and the Nasdaq by a ratio of about 4 to 1. □

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Banks up borrowing from Fed's emergency program

By JEANNINE AVERSA,
AP Economics Writer
WASHINGTON — Banks have increased their borrowing from the Federal Reserve's emergency lending program, but the use of other programs created to ease the financial crisis has decreased, presenting a mixed picture of credit conditions. The Fed, in a weekly report issued Thursday, said commercial banks averaged \$39.1 billion in daily borrowing over the week that ended Wednesday. That was up from \$36.2 billion in the

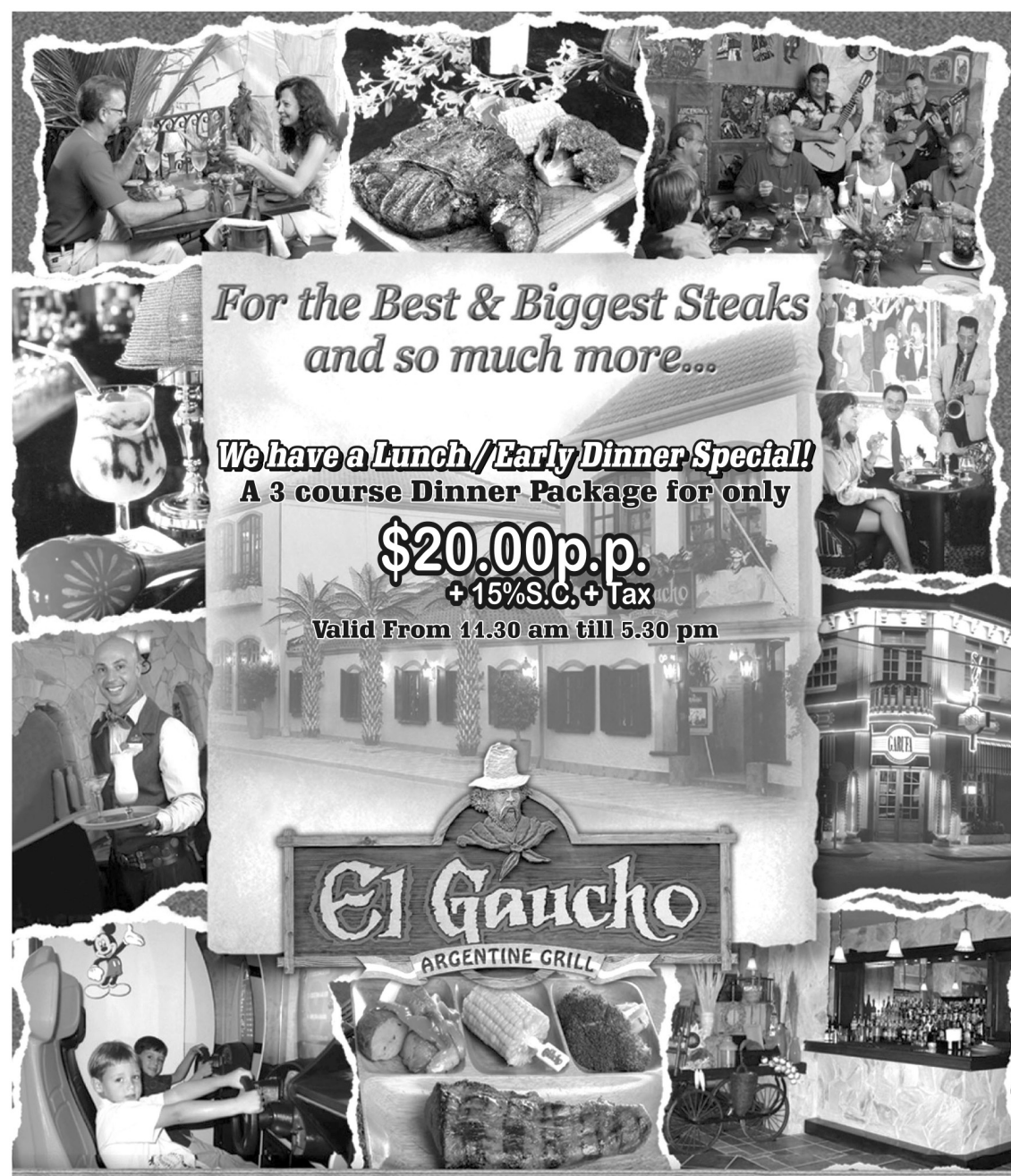
week ended June 17. Investment firms didn't draw any loans for the sixth straight week. The last time they drew any money — just \$482 million — was in the week that ended May 13. The identities of the financial institutions are not released. They pay just 0.50 percent in interest for the emergency loans. Separately, the Fed moved Thursday to scale back some programs it launched last fall at the height of the financial crisis. It will allow one program intended to support

money market mutual funds — which hasn't been used — to expire Oct. 30. And it's reducing the maximum it will lend to banks under two other programs. The weekly lending report showed the Fed's net holdings of "commercial paper" averaged \$128 billion over the week that ended Wednesday, a decrease of \$7.9 billion from the previous week. Commercial paper is the crucial short-term debt that companies use to pay everyday expenses, which the

Fed began buying under the first-of-its-kind program on Oct. 27, a time of intensified credit problems. The central bank has said about \$1.3 trillion worth of commercial paper would qualify. The report also showed the Fed stepped up its purchases of mortgage-backed securities guaranteed by Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac and Ginnie Mae. They averaged \$467 billion over the past week, up \$11.8 billion from the previous week. The goal of the program, which started on Jan. 5, is to drive down mortgage rates and help the housing market.

However, mortgage rates resumed their upward march this week. Rates on 30-year home loans rose to 5.42 percent, from 5.38 percent last week, Freddie Mac reported Thursday. Some analysts worried that a recent run-up in rates on mortgages and Treasury securities — if prolonged — could choke off prospects for an economic recovery. However, the Fed didn't appear to buy that notion. The central bank on Wednesday opted not to expand purchases of government debt or mortgage securities beyond the amounts already announced. Squeezed banks have been borrowing from the Fed because they couldn't get money elsewhere. Investors

have cut them off and shifted their money into safer Treasury securities. Financial institutions are hoarding much of their cash, rather than lending it to each other or customers. The lockup in lending has contributed to the longest recession since World War II. Investment houses in March 2008 were given similar emergency-loan privileges as commercial banks after a run on Bear Stearns pushed what was the nation's fifth-largest investment bank to the brink of bankruptcy and into a takeover by JPMorgan Chase & Co. Critics worry the Fed's actions have put billions of taxpayers' dollars at risk. Bolstering those concerns, the assets the Fed took on last year when it bailed out Bear Stearns and insurer American International Group Inc. have dipped in value. The report also said that credit provided to AIG averaged \$42.6 billion for the week ending Wednesday, down slightly from the previous week. The central bank's balance sheet stands at \$1.996 trillion, down from last week. The balance sheet has more than doubled since September, reflecting the Fed's many unconventional efforts — various programs to lend or buy debt — to mend the financial system and lift the country out of recession. □



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Michael Jackson dies in LA hospital



Michael Jackson waves to supporters as he leaves the Santa Barbara County Courthouse in California, June 13, 2005.

REUTERS/Stringer

Born August 29, 1958, to a musically inclined working-class family in Gary, Indiana, Michael Joseph Jackson's destiny was set in stone from day one. While showing a devout interest in music early on in his childhood - as did the rest of his older brothers -- Michael began performing at a young age. His allegedly controlling father apparently forced young Michael and his brothers to form a musical group called the Jackson 5. The group's popularity immediately skyrocketed after relentlessly performing in a countless number of local talent shows. In 1968, the Jackson 5 was signed to Motown Records and gained recognition for its early chart-toppers, including "I Want You Back," "ABC" and "I'll Be There." Michael led the pack as the group's lead singer and dancer.

Michael Jackson thriller

Although the group released thirteen albums in only seven years and charted several No. 1 R&B hits during that time, Michael felt the need to begin his solo career. In 1979, Michael moved to New York and collaborated with established R&B hit-maker Quincy Jones on Jackson's first solo effort, *Off the Wall*. The album was a success as it reached the No. 3 spot and delivered four Top 10 hits for MJ, including two US number one singles, "Don't Stop 'Til You Get Enough" and "Rock With You."

After the successful debut of *Off the Wall*, Michael reunited with his brothers to record another album and go back on tour. However, his solo career exploded in 1982 when he released one of the most commercially successful albums of all-time, *Thriller*. At this point, Michael transformed into a media icon and instantly became one of the biggest artists in the history of pop music. The album spawned a countless number of hit singles, each accompanied by a promotional music video on MTV.

michael jackson bad

In 1987, Jackson returned with his highly anticipated follow-up, *Bad*. Although the album reached the No. 1 spot once again, it wasn't nearly as successful as his previous effort. MJ tried his luck once again in 1991 with the release of his fourth solo effort, *Dangerous*, however, the rise of grunge music drowned out the seemingly stale sounds of Michael's pop music. Times were changing and musical preferences were shifting accordingly.

The next several years proved to be trying times for Michael, as success reared its ugly head. His erratic side started to shine through and Michael quickly became the target of tabloids and media hounds alike. His visual appearance undertook a dramatic change and he developed an image as

an abnormally shy character that held a fond appreciation for children. Rumors of child abuse and pedophilia began to surface, leading to Michael's disappearance from the public eye.

Michael Jackson marries Lisa Marie Presley

In 1994, Michael reappeared in the spotlight by marrying Lisa Marie Presley, a stunt seen by many as an attempt to clean up his image. The marriage barely lasted two years and Michael, once again ridiculed for his actions, tied the knot in 1996 to his newfound acquaintance, Debbie Rowe. The couple had their first child together in February 1997, Prince Michel Jackson Jr. 1995 marked the year of Michael's triumphant return to the music scene. *HIStory: Past, Present and Future -*

Book 1 was a retaliation of sorts for MJ. The double album contained material that clearly proved to the world that Michael was fed up with the rumors and controversy surrounding his private life. It was time to fight back; and fight back he did. Pop princess Janet accompanied her brother on the Top 5 single "Scream," which demonstrated the duo's distaste for the media surrounding their family life. Michael also fought back on the song "They Don't Care About Us," which became the subject of controversy due to anti-Semitic lyrics. This retaliation of sorts cleared the way for his 6th solo release in 1997, *Blood On The Dance Floor*.

Michael Jackson invincible

Michael returned with his final album, *Invincible*. The late

October 2001 album release came around the same time that Jackson celebrated his 30th Anniversary Celebration as a solo artist. The sold-out concert included guest appearances from the likes of *N Sync, Usher and Whitney Houston, among others. The concert celebration was broadcast on cable in an effort to promote the King of Pop's defiant return to the music scene.

However, the remainder of his life as a musician mostly revolved around disputes related to his estate. He kept a low profile for the most part until his reported death, at age 50, on June 25, 2009, which according to TMZ.com was as a result of cardiac arrest. At the time of his alleged death, he was slated to perform 50 scheduled sold-out concerts through the summer. □

'Transformers' has record Wednesday with \$60.6M



Sold-out early Wednesday a.m. screenings for 'Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen' are displayed at Universal Citywalk AMC Cinemas in Los Angeles, Tuesday night, June 23, 2009. The film opens nationwide on Wednesday.

(AP Photo/Chris Pizzello)

LOS ANGELES — Those "Transformers" robots are record-breakers at the box office.

"Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen" opened with \$60.6 million domestically in its first day, a new high for a Wednesday debut, according to distributor Paramount.

The previous best Wednesday opening was \$44.2 million for "Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix" in 2007.

The "Transformers" sequel

also came in with the second-biggest single-day revenues, behind only "The Dark Knight," with \$67.2 million. "The Dark Knight" opened on a Friday.

Fans stayed up into the wee hours to be the first to see the "Transformers" sequel, which took in \$16 million from midnight screenings alone.

Paramount projected the movie would follow with \$25 million on Thursday and climb to at least \$150 million by the

end of the weekend. In just five days, that would put it to nearly half the \$319 million total the first "Transformers" film did during its entire run in 2007.

The sequel reunites Shia LaBeouf, Megan Fox, Tyrese Gibson, John Turturro and other co-stars as the humans again team up with the shape-shifting Autobots against their evil robot enemies, the Decepticons. □



Farrah Fawcett, First Among Angels, Has Died

Continued from Front Page Becoming an Angel

Even alongside Kate Jackson's smart Sabrina Duncan and Jaclyn Smith's beautiful Kelly Garrett, Fawcett stood out as sunny, sun-tinged private-detective Jill Munroe on Charlie's Angels. Born Feb. 2, 1947, in Corpus Christi, Texas, Fawcett moved to Hollywood in the late 1960s and found the town a pushover for her breathy twang. She began landing bit TV parts and lathering up football hero Joe Namath with shaving cream for a commercial. While Fawcett stood out, she wasn't yet a star.

That would change—and change quickly—with producer Aaron Spelling's uncanny mix of feminism and jiggle. Within two months of Charlie's Angels' Sept. 22, 1976, premiere, Time magazine declared Jackson, Smith and Fawcett: "TV's Super Women."

On a show that sold sex, nobody sold more of it than Fawcett. Especially in poster shops.

Shot shortly before, and released shortly after the toothy Texas blonde became a prime-time star, the famous Fawcett poster featured the actress in a one-piece red bathing suit and posed in front

of an old Indian blanket. The image was simple, unexotic, and, according to Fawcett's longtime manager, historic. "Nipples. It was the first time people had been exposed to nipples," the late Jay Bernstein once told Britain's Channel 4. "Hundreds of thousands of men had their first sexual experience with Farrah Fawcett. She just wasn't there."

The poster went on to sell a reported and reputedly record 12 million copies, one of which was launched into orbit by an appreciative NASA.

Fawcett, known during the height of her 1970s fame as Farrah Fawcett-Majors, from her then marriage to Six Million Dollar Man star Lee Majors, secured her exit from Charlie's Angels after only one season (although producers obliged her to return for a handful of episodes through 1980). Fawcett sought more money, bigger projects and, ultimately, respect.

"I became famous almost before I had a craft," Fawcett told the New York Times in 1986. "I didn't study drama at school. I was an art major. Suddenly, when I was doing Charlie's Angels, I was getting all this fan mail, and I didn't really know why. I don't think anybody else did, either."

Victories and Defeats

Fawcett's initial post-Angels projects were duds—the sci-fi clunker Saturn 3, among them.

A turning point in Fawcett's career came in 1984, when she earned an Emmy nomination, and finally respect, as the battered wife in The Burning Bed. She went on to rate two more Emmy nods, one for the 1989 TV-movie Small Sacrifices and one for a 2001 guest appearance on The Guardian. She garnered Oscar buzz for playing a revenge-seeking rape victim in the 1986 film Extremities, a project she first tackled off-Broadway.

The 1990s was a tough decade personally and professionally for Fawcett. Her brand of TV-movies died. Her attempt at a sitcom, Good Sports, didn't take. Her relationship with O'Neal seemed over.

In 1997, Fawcett put in a loopy, trainwreck of an appearance on David Letterman's Late Show. In 1998, she reluctantly, and tearfully, took the stand in the trial of director James Orr, who was convicted of a misdemeanor charge of beating his Man of the House leading lady.

If anything, Fawcett's Playboy pictorial was the highlight of the period. Age 48 and sans a red—or any other kind



of—bathing suit, Fawcett posed nude and brought Hugh Hefner's empire its best-selling issue of the decade.

By the 2000s, as Drew Barrymore was turning Charlie's Angels into a big-screen, big-budget franchise, Fawcett was an prime-time guest star who looked to reality-TV to give her a starring role, as well as a platform to combat post-Letterman perceptions. Chasing Farrah ran seven episodes in 2005.

In 2006, Fawcett reunited with Jackson and Smith at the Primetime Emmy Awards for a tribute to Spelling, who'd died earlier that summer.

"The three of us didn't experience the Charlie's Angels phenomenon like the rest of the world did," a tearful Fawcett told the audience. "We experienced it from the inside—the eye of that televised storm—together."

The Fight

Just weeks after the Emmys, in October 2006, Fawcett was diagnosed with cancer. She was declared cancer-free in early 2007, just before her 60th birthday, only to have a new cancer diagnosis a few months later.

"I am resolutely strong, and I am determined to bite the bullet and fight the fight," Fawcett said after her initial 2006 diagnosis.

Fawcett seemed to battle the tabloid press as much as her disease. She and her reps seethed at headlines, dating back to 2006, that declared: "Farrah Began: Let Me Die!" Much as with Chasing Farrah,

Fawcett sought to control her story by producing a documentary on her cancer fight.

Last year, Fawcett's battle took her to Germany, where she underwent treatment before returning to Los Angeles and being admitted to a Los Angeles hospital in early April. While some reports at the time described Fawcett's condition as grave, her doctor said the actress was being treated for bleeding unrelated to the cancer. And while Fawcett headed home on April 10, there was not much to celebrate: Her doctor also noted the cancer had spread to her liver.

Later that month, Fawcett's troubled 24-year-old son, Redmond O'Neal, who'd been arrested on drug charges April 5 while Fawcett was still hospitalized, was temporarily released from custody and, in leg shackles, allowed to visit his mother's bedside in Malibu. Jail officials allowed the younger O'Neal to speak to his mother by telephone before her passing.

Fawcett was married to Majors from 1973-82. Although she announced her split from Ryan O'Neal in 1997, the two were an on-again, off-again couple since about 1982.

The couple never seemed more on-again than when Fawcett took ill.

"In the last two years, I loved her more than I've ever loved her—ever," O'Neal told Today this year.

Said O'Neal: "I don't know what I'll do without her, to tell you the truth." □

Stars Tweet Respects to Farrah Fawcett

Breanne L. Heldman

Los Angeles (E! Online) – The Twitterverse is full of Hollywood's instant reactions to Farrah Fawcett's death:

- Christina Applegate, a cancer survivor herself, was appropriately moved and inspired. "Today please donate money to a great cancer organization for research. This damn disease has taken another. We must find a cure. Farrah RIP."
- Marlee Matlin knew Fawcett after they spent an awards season in competition and shared her thoughts in two separate tweets. "So sad to hear about the passing of beautiful Farrah. She & I were nominated for Golden Globes together. Gracious and lovely inside and out," she noted. "My thoughts and prayers to Farrah's dear Ryan her son and family. She was beautiful AND strong. She fought hard battle and showed dignity."
- Paula Abdul also had some choice words regarding the idol. "What a wonderful, beautiful woman inside & out. Kind as can be, an amazing fighter who always kept hope in her heart. We can all learn a lot from her tremendous will to keep on fighting. God Bless You Farrah & may she finally rest in peace."

• Rocker Shooter Jennings remembers the pinup sweetly. "Goodbye Farrah!!! Like a kazillion other guys I once loved you!!! Sleep well. The battle is over."

• Fellow musician Rob Thomas decided to forgo his song of the day in Farrah's honor.

• "GOD bless Miss. Fawcett. What a beautiful woman. She will be admired forever," wrote Miley Cyrus.

• Khloe Kardashian was also moved. "Say a prayer for her family please. So sad when anyone passes!!! God bless all who have lost anyone special!"

• Alyssa Milano hopes the angel will pass along a message to the afterlife. "R.I.P. Farrah Fawcett. You will be missed. And if you see Mr. Spelling in your new journey, tell him I miss him."

• Perhaps director-producer Adam Shankman said it best. "Farewell Farrah. Forever you will be an angel here on earth, and now in heaven. We'll miss u."

Denise Richards, Brooke Burke, Soleil Moon Frye, Nicky and Paris Hilton, Trista Sutter, Nicole Richie, Joel Madden and Kelly Osbourne were among those to share similar sentiments. Feel free to share yours here or on Twitter @eonline. □

Come celebrate Cuba's Cookin 10th anniversary



ORANJESTAD — Cuba's Cooking restaurant on charming, colonial Wilhelminastraat in town is celebrating its 10th anniversary. Publisher Douglass Marcus who owns the 'joint' reminisces: "It's been 10 years since Cuba's Cookin' opened here, and every time I return to the "big island" to keep up with family & friends, I also seek out new paintings and photographs for the restaurant walls now boasting over 250 pieces of

art. I feel it has become my mission to bring the hospitality, food, art, and music of Cuba to Aruba. The similarity and kinship of these two islands goes back to the turn of the century when many Arubans went to Cuba in search of backbreaking work in the sugarcane fields. During that time many Arubans married (thereby gaining the name De Cuba) and returned to their homeland with Cuban wives and many continue to nurture their split roots between the

big and small islands. In my 10 years as owner of Cuba's Cookin' I have had a great time meeting so many of them and sharing the love for this rich neighboring culture."

Ten years ago Douglass created a gem of a place, Cuba's Cookin', serving hearty Caribbean soul food and of recently some great Nuevo Latino dishes which are fresh, artistic, colorful and vibrant, just like the island on which they were created.

The Grilled Chicken Mofongo, stuffed with sweet mashed plantain, onion pate and mushrooms, the Chicken 'n Olives, one of the tastiest dishes on the menu imported to Aruba from the hills of Vanales, marinated in green olives, crushed garlic and a pinch of brown sugar, the Stuffed Pork flavored with capers, over-roasted in a deep brown sauce, the tropically-inspired Coconut Shrimp or the Cuban BBQ Ribs—nobody does pork ribs better than the Cubans — will take your mind off the classic comfort foods such as Ropa Vieja, literally translated as old clothes, Cuba's most popular dish and Picadillo de Res, the Cuban signature chopped sirloin, served with incredible yummy sides.

Cuba's Cookin's best feature is live music, offered every night of the week with Maestro Ramon and Juan on guitars, and Siohuky on percussions, playing Bolero, Son, Cancion, Guajiro, all traditional Cuban songs, delivering truly thrilling moments with the amazing dancing waitresses, swaying away mid-service.

Coly has been at the restaurant for ten years, and she is a terrific dancer, entertaining guests with her Latin flair between courses. Yendi has been there for ten years, she too is a mover and a shaker. Gianinna, the manager has been at Cuba's Cooking for 10 years, Rosa the cleaning lady has been there for ten years, the cooks have been there for ten years, in short, it's a place hard to leave, and great to return to, also thanks to Christian the bartender, who mixes amazing real deal Mojitos, and they are free



this month in honor of Cuba's Cookin' 10th Anniversary. "Please come and join us for lunch or dinner and receive a free Mojito or Cuba Libre as

well as our 2 for 1 drinks at the bar," says Douglass, as a form of open invitations. Sounds pretty irresistible, and Happy Anniversary! □



At Moby Dick's in the Paseo Herencia Mall

100 years of combined Aruba patronage dine together



PALM BEACH – Every year this group of island guests have a dinner together and this year they chose the popular new Seafood Restaurant Moby Dick's. Some have

20 years under their belt and some only a few, but when the group of 10 friends of Aruba combine their years of visiting Aruba, they reach 100 years of patronage to the Happy Island



of Aruba. They are all owners at the Playa Linda Beach Resort and have their favorite restaurants on Aruba, and this year they

added another one to the top of their list. Enjoying the treasures of the sea and the friendliness of the sweet & salty staff, they are already

making plans to visit Moby Dick's Seafood Restaurant on their next trip back to Aruba

~ Photos by Julia Renfro ~

Miramichi Rotarians visited by groups from Venezuela, Aruba in exchange

The Group Study Exchange is a unique cultural and vocational exchange opportunity for young business and professional men and women between the ages of 25 and 40 in the initial years of their professional life. The program provides travel grants for teams of young participants to exchange visits between paired areas in different countries. For four to six weeks, team members study the host country's institutions and ways of life, observe their own vocations as practiced abroad, develop personal and professional relationships and exchange ideas. This year's GSE team, from Aruba and Venezuela, arrived in Miramichi on May 21, the day the city was the hottest spot in Canada. They had already visited clubs in Moncton, Fredericton and Sackville. They arrived at noon and attended the Chatham Rotary meeting. The group then went out on the river with Captain Dan for two hours.

The evening was spent with their Rotarian host families.

Friday was a vocational day so the dentist spent the morning with Drs. Gauthier, Marchand and Mahabir. The social journalist spent the morning at the food bank and the clothing store owner with Emily Hanscon of Her Clothes Closet. The Rotarian visited with Donna Daley At Royal Lepage Miramichi River Realty and Geri Mahoney at her law firm. She met Rotarians who owned their own business and their offices were in beautiful period homes. Then it was on to the Newcastle Farmers Market.

Lunch was hosted by the Rodd Miramichi. A visit to the Edgewater Gifts & Gallery and the hospital rounded out the day. Chatham and Newcastle Rotary joined together for a supper of salmon and fiddleheads and enjoyed the presentation about the visitors communities, vocations and volunteer work.



The Earlybird Menu

Served between 4 pm & 6.30 pm

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Friday afternoon with DJ Jeroen at Bugaloe



sunset, is his motto. Jeroen's music changes as darkness falls and dancing gets underway. Bugaloe, which is a great hang-out for locals as well as for visitors, has an extended menu, by the way. Choose a 'broodje frikandel' or 'broodje kroket', snacks that the Dutch crave, or a healthy grouper special or the fish platter. So don't forget to come by at Bugaloe on Fridays to hear DJ Jeroen play, and start the weekend on a high note. Happy Hour at the beach bar, located on the De Palm Pier between the Riu Palace and the Radisson Resort, is from 5 to 6 pm, with special prices for Amstel Bright and mojitos. □



PALM BEACH - Rhythm-driven DJ Jeroen is getting the vibes going, the adrenaline surging and the blood pumping on Fridays, when the popular local disc jockey is playing his music in beach bar Bugaloe. From 5 to 10 pm you can see this energetic man in action and listen to his easy lounge music early in the evening. Soothe your souls at



New tenants pick up their store keys at the Palm Beach Mall



PALM BEACH -- Skechers Apparel, a super popular brand selling casual and dress shoes, infant and toddler shoes, boots and sandals is coming into the Palm Beach Mall.

Owner Suresh Nathani recently met with Mall Manager Alex Otterspeer to receive his keys and a bottle on champagne in celebration of the happy occasion.

Leo Correa – the man who brought Aldo to Aruba, is opening the Shoebox, a multi-brand outlet offering Jimmy Choo's & Diane von Furstenberg creations as well as a dedicated corner for specialized cosmetics by La Chinata, an olive oil based line.

The fabulous Palm Beach Plaza set to open in the early fall concluded construction and tenants are now dedicating their time and energy to interior décor. The Palm Beach Plaza on the boulevard just below the Marriott Surf Club will offer 15.000 m2 of fine dining, shopping and entertainment, as the largest mall in the Southern Caribbean, conceived as an all-day family entertainment center offering an abundance of activities to vacationers and locals, of all ages.

Developed by Landy NV, with managing director Muller Solognier, as a partnership of three well-established business entrepreneurs, the multi-level

mall attracted a great number of prestigious tenants.

They all express their enthusiasm about moving into the heart of Palm Beach, within walking distance to all high-rise resorts, with their new businesses.

The Palm Beach Plaza is welcoming Shivas Gold & Gems, Tommy Hilfiger, Façonnable, Benetton, San Marina Shoes, Sunspecs, Swatch & Del Sol, Sketchers, Nautica, Royal Jewels & Diamonds, Monarch Jewels, Guess, Guess Kids, Perry Ellis, Addict, Penha Perfumeries, Panache, the Shoe Box, Jon Sonen, Shabby Chic, Giordano, an 8 movie-theater Mega Plex, Aruba's first food court, and a children's entertainment floor operating a Kiddie-Train, a Rock Climbing wall, a Bowling Alley, an electronic game zone and a thrilling Cable Slide, next to an indoor supervised play room.

The mall will also feature a Day Spa, a branch of Western Union, the Post-Office and a Mini-Market, in addition to a number of theme restaurants and bars including Casa Tua Mediterranean, Havana Cigar & Spirit Bar, Epoca Nuova, Hoshi Sushi and Mama Mexico, Mimo's Ice Cream and Sir James House of Coffee set amid tropical vegetation, with 354 easily accessible,



ground level parking spaces, and nicely lit walking lanes to and from the hotel strip.

Pictured here Anil, receiving keys on behalf of Suresh

Nathani and Leo Correa with his fashion-guru wife, and Mall Manager Alex Otterspeer. □

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Soccer stars at Amazonia



PALM BEACH – Some very famous international Dutch soccer stars made it to Amazonia Churrascaria one evening this week, coming in with an entourage of family members and friends, late, at the end of the evening's dinner rush, to enjoy a measure of

anonymity and a sense of true vacation. Restaurant manager Hubert Solagnier made sure their experience was superb and provided them with a rare treat, privacy and quiet. At the end of dinner, Dirk Kuyt posed for some pictures while Andre Ooijer opted for dessert. □

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A new service introduced, and buy one get one Free Breakfasts

Segafredo Café now offers lunch delivery

SOUTHBEACHCENTRE—Segafredo Café at the South Beach Centre just announced that it is offering free lunch delivery of sandwiches and drinks midday.

Just submit your order prior to 11 a.m., fax it or call in, and your baguette, croissant or ciabatta sandwiches will arrive at your doorstep escorted by a choice of salads, tosti, muffins, coffees to go and drinks to go.

Segafredo Café at the South Beach Centre offers more than just delicious coffee. It serves dinner, drinks, frozen cocktails, beer, munchies, snacks, lunch

and naturally, coffee anytime, and not just any old brew.

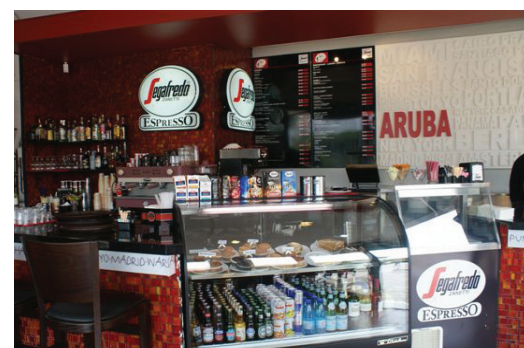
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Café in the South Beach Centre, makes it perfect as a place for friends!

The menu says manager Sartini Kousmaker offers Coffee, Hot and Iced Coffee Drinks, Coffee Specialties, Tea, Fruit Smoothies, Champagne Cocktails, Fine Wines by the Glass, Imported Beers, Premium Martinis, Tropical Cocktails & Frozen Libations.

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Aruba is the only country in the world to celebrate St. John's Day

Paseo Herencia celebrates Dera Gai



PALM BEACH - Aruba has its own distinct culture, which often includes celebrations.

Color and music play an important role in the majority of cultural events, most notably





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in the yearly Carnival and Dia Di San Juan (St. John's Day) celebrations.

Arubans dress in red and yellow traditional shirt and a black traditional trouser to represent fire during the Dia Di San Juan celebration. This celebration originates from a combination of pre-Christian Arawak harvest festivals and the works of Spanish missionaries to combine them with the celebration of San Juan.



Aruba is the only country in the world that celebrates this day with dancing and singing. During the celebration a singer will chant a familiar "dera gai" (bury rooster) tune while players accompany the song with drum, violin, and local instrument called a wiri.

While they sing, they will choose someone to come and try to hit a fake rooster with their eyes close. When that person hits it, in that rooster, it will bring a wonderful smell. This wonderful smell comes from the fruit (calabash). □

Photos by Julia Renfro





Senators claim \$1 trillion health bill in reach

By ERICA WERNER and DAVID ESPO

Associated Press Writers
WASHINGTON

— Senators working to give President Barack Obama a comprehensive health care overhaul said Thursday they had figured out how to pare back the complex legislation to keep costs from crashing through a \$1 trillion, 10-year ceiling.

The announcement from Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus, D-Mont., and other lawmakers amounted to a small, parting gift to Obama on his top domestic priority as Congress prepares to leave town for its weeklong July 4 recess. It moved Congress a bit closer to a deal on legislation to lower costs and provide coverage to nearly 50 million Americans who lack it.

It also capped two weeks of tough going for health care negotiations on Capitol Hill as price tags as high as \$1.6 trillion over 10 years sent senators back to the drawing board and forced deadlines to be repeatedly reset.

“We have options that would enable us to write a \$1 trillion bill, fully paid for,” Baucus said at a news conference.

Baucus declined to detail how the costs were being cut, but options included difficult sacrifices like potentially delaying an expansion of Medicaid, the federal-state program for the poor.

Others have said the changes made in recent days would lower the cost of government subsidies for those who cannot afford insurance, as well as pare back a planned 10-year series of rate increases for doctors serving Medicare patients.

Aides said the Congressional Budget Office had estimated that the elements under consideration would extend



In this April 2, 2009 file photo, Senate Finance Committee Chairman Sen. Max Baucus, D-Mont., left, and the committee's ranking Republican Sen. Charles Grassley, R-Iowa talk on Capitol Hill in Washington.

Associated Press

coverage to 97 percent of the population, excluding illegal immigrants.

But even Democrats acknowledged that Thursday's announcement fell short of a final deal on legislation to meet Obama's goals.

“There's not a final bill that's agreed to. What there is now is a clear path to having a bill that is paid for,” said Sen. Kent Conrad, D-N.D., one of seven Republican and Democratic Finance Committee senators who've been working closely on the deal.

Baucus has dubbed the group “the coalition of the willing.” All seven issued a brief, joint statement later Thursday claiming progress, even though some Republicans involved made no secret of their skepticism.

“We have not seen language (of legislation) in any way shape or form,” said Sen. Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, one member of the group. He questioned how Baucus could claim to be cutting costs before a bill was finalized and claimed it amounted to “gimmickry.”

The Finance Committee had hoped to pass a bill by now, but given the setbacks of recent weeks Thursday's announcement was seen as progress. Of the five House and Senate panels writing health care bills, Finance is the only one with a real chance of producing a bipartisan bill, something Obama has repeatedly said he wants. The committee will resume work when lawmakers return to Washington after July 4.

Continued on Next Page

U.S. swine flu cases may have hit 1 million

MIKE STOBBE

AP Medical Writer

ATLANTA (AP) — As many as 1 million Americans now have swine flu, U.S. health officials said Thursday, adding that 6 percent or more of some urban areas are infected.

The estimate voiced by a government flu scientist Thursday was no surprise to the experts who have been closely watching the virus.

“We knew diagnosed cases were just the tip of the iceberg,” said Dr. William Schaffner, a Vanderbilt University infectious diseases expert who was in Atlanta for the meeting of a vaccine advisory panel.

Continued on Page B3



In a Thursday, April 30, 2009 file photo, a sample of suspected swine flu is displayed by a technician at the Washington State Public Health Laboratories in Shoreline, Wash.

Associated Press



Students wearing gags on their mouths protest against Honduras President Manuel Zelaya outside the Venezuelan embassy in Tegucigalpa, Thursday, June 25, 2009.

Associated Press

Honduras leader refuses to restore military chief

FREDDY CUEVAS

Associated Press Writer

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras (AP) — The Honduran president vowed Thursday to ignore a Supreme Court ruling ordering him to reinstate the military chief he fired, escalating a showdown that has threatened the leftist leader's hold on power.

President Manuel Zelaya's attempt to hold a referendum Sunday on changing the constitution has pitted him against the country's top courts, the attorney general, military leaders and even his own party, all of whom argue the vote is illegal. But Zelaya has galvanized the support of labor leaders, farmers and civic organizations who hope constitutional reforms will give them a greater voice in a conservative country where 70 percent of the population is poor.

Continued on Page B6

Climate bill showdown: Obama, Dems pressing hard

DINA CAPPIELLO

Associated Press Writers

WASHINGTON (AP) —

President Barack Obama pushed urgently Thursday for passage of legislation to confront global warming, billing it as a job-creating machine rather than the costly “job killer” Republicans have been denouncing. He telephoned wavering Democrats on the eve of what could be a historic vote in the House of Representatives.

Speaking in the Rose Garden at the White House, Obama said the United States must not miss the opportunity to work on cleaning the air, creating new “green” energy jobs and moving the nation away from its reliance on fossil fuels such as oil, coal and natural gas.

The White House appeared worried that momentum for the bill might be slipping, although White House press secretary Robert Gibbs said that when it came time for a House showdown, “I’d bet on the president.”

Democratic leaders scurried to line up enough votes to get the bill passed. They enlisted former Vice President Al Gore, the country’s most prominent voice on the urgency of dealing with climate change, to make phone calls to wary lawmakers — including some who believe the House bill was too weak rather than too strong.

House Republicans for weeks have maintained a drumbeat against the legislation, calling it a massive energy tax on every American and a “job killer” because it will force higher prices on electricity, gasoline and other energy sources as the economy shifts from cheaper fossil fuels, or as companies and utilities are forced to buy pollution allowances.

Obama as well as the Democratic House speaker, Nancy Pelosi, sought to counter that argument.

“This is going to be a close vote because of misinformation out there that there’s somehow a contradiction between clean energy and economic growth,” said Obama. Rather than emphasizing any impact on pollution or global



President Barack Obama comments in the Rose Garden of the White House in Washington, Thursday, June 25, 2009, on the importance of the passing of the energy bill.

warming, he called the House legislation “a jobs bill” that will lead to the creation of new industries and “finally make clean energy a profitable kind of energy.”

“It will create millions of new jobs,” echoed Pelosi at a Capitol Hill press conference. By late Thursday it still was unclear whether Pelosi, who has been courting moderate Republicans as well as fellow Democrats in the search for votes, had the 218 lawmakers she needed to get the bill passed. It is widely expected that if she is not certain of having a majority, she will not allow a vote Friday.

Meanwhile, 241 proposed amendments, most by Republicans seeking to scuttle the bill, were submitted for consideration, although most likely will be rejected by the House Rules Committee working into the evening Thursday. Exchanges before the panel provided a hint of the tone of the upcoming floor debate.

Democratic Rep. Henry Waxman, one of the chief sponsors of the bill, told the committee the bill “takes a balanced approach” and is supported by many in industry as well as environmentalists. “It would radically change America as we know it,” countered Rep. Joe Barton, a Republican. “It would mean

the elimination of all fossil fuels used in America by the year 2050.”

The Senate, meanwhile, was waiting for the House to act. Approval of a climate bill in the Senate has been viewed as a long shot because it would require 60 votes to overcome a delaying tactics that the Republicans are certain to use. That has made a decision by some House Democrats to vote for the politically charged bill even harder since final passage is so much in doubt. The legislation would require the country to reduce carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions that can lead to climate change — 17 percent by 2020 and about 80 percent by the next century. To do that, electricity producers and industrial plants would have to make dramatic shifts away from the use of fossil fuels through increased efficiency,

move toward greater use of renewable energy or pay for ways to capture carbon emissions.

Democrats have sought to limit the economic impact with provisions that would make available pollution allowances to utilities and energy-intensive industries and protect low-income consumers from higher energy costs by providing them rebates and credits.

But some Democratic lawmakers, from regions where utilities and factories rely heavily on coal, remain worried about higher energy prices and the impact that might have on voters.

Still other Democrats complain the bill has been watered down too much with concessions to garner broader support. Gore was said to be making calls from his home in Tennessee to shore up support among those

lawmakers as well as others still on the fence.

Gibbs said Obama was calling lawmakers, too, although he would not give any names. Carol Browner, the White House coordinator on energy and climate, also was on the phone to members of Congress, as was White House chief of staff Rahm Emmanuel.

Lobbying on both sides of the issue intensified this week as Pelosi said she wanted a bill finished before lawmakers left for the July 4 holiday recess.

While most environmental groups as well as a number of business organizations and corporations have endorsed the bill, other industry groups, including the American Petroleum Institute and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, have urged its defeat. Despite the concession to farmers, the American Farm Bureau Federation said Wednesday it remains opposed, calling the bill “seriously flawed.”

“What we see is a job killer. ... There’s no question that cap and trade will cost millions of jobs,” said House Republican whip Eric Cantor, seeking to rally opposition to the bill. In the U.S. Congress, the whip is the party official in charge of party discipline.

“There’s no question the cap-and-trade will cost millions of jobs” and higher energy prices, Cantor said.

A new Washington Post-ABC News poll said three-quarters of Americans think the federal government should regulate the release of greenhouse gases, and 56 percent say they would approve such measures even if it increased their monthly electricity costs by \$10. □

HEALTH BILL

Continued from Page B1

The House will also continue work on a partisan bill that embraces Democratic priorities, and similar legislation is taking shape in the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee.

All the bills envision new requirements for all Americans to have health insurance, and prohibitions against insurance companies denying people care.

Still unsettled are the divisive questions of whether to create a new public plan to compete against private insurers, and what

types of requirements employers should face to offer coverage to their workers.

Across from the Capitol Thursday, hundreds of people, including actress Edie Falco, rallied for health care overhaul.

Organizing for America, Obama’s political operation within the Democratic National Committee, plans thousands of service events around the country Saturday aimed at building support for health care overhaul among a restive public wary of higher costs, lower quality and a price tag that will swell the federal deficit. □



Director of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention Dr. Thomas R. Frieden gives an update about swine flu, during a press conference at the CDC in Atlanta Thursday, June 11, 2009. Health officials at Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta said Thursday, June 25 2009, that they estimate that as many as 1 million Americans now have the new swine flu.

Associated Press

SWINE FLU

Continued from Page B1

Lyn Finelli, a flu surveillance official with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, made the 1 million estimate in a presentation to the vaccine panel. The number is from mathematical modeling, based on surveys by health officials.

Regular seasonal flu sickens anywhere from 15 million to 60 million Americans each year. The United States has roughly half the world's swine flu cases, with nearly 28,000 reported to the CDC so far. The U.S. count includes 3,065 hospitalizations and 127 deaths.

The percentage of cases hospitalized has been growing, but that may be due to closer scrutiny of very sick patients. It takes about three days from the time symptoms appear to hospitalization, Finelli said, and the average hospital stay has been three days.

Other health problems have been a factor in most cases: About one in three of the hospitalized cases had asthma, 16 percent diabetes, 12 percent have immune system problems and 11 percent chronic heart disease.

The numbers again highlight how the young seem to be particularly at risk of catching the new virus. But data also show that the flu has been more dangerous to adults who catch it.

The average age of swine flu patients is 12, the average age for hospitalized patients is 20, and for people who died, it was 37. It seems to be deadliest to people 65 and older, with

deaths in more than 2 percent of elderly people infected, Finelli said.

Also at the meeting, CDC officials made projections about flu vaccines expected to be available to protect against both seasonal and swine flu this fall.

Roughly 10 million doses of seasonal flu vaccine should be available by early September, and production for the whole flu season should be around the 143 million doses produced for the 2008-09 season, said Dr. Anthony Fiore, a CDC flu specialist. □

NTSB panel probes two incidents involving Airbus A330s

JOAN LOWY

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. safety officials said Thursday they are investigating two incidents in which airspeed and altitude indications in the cockpits of Airbus A330 planes may have malfunctioned.

The aircraft are the same type as the Air France plane that crashed into the Atlantic Ocean just off Brazil on May 31 after sending out low airspeed messages, killing all 228 aboard.

The National Transportation Safety Board said in a statement that the first incident occurred May 21, when TAM Airlines Flight 8091 flying from Miami to Sao Paulo, Brazil, experienced a loss of primary speed and altitude information while cruising.

Initial reports indicate that the flight crew noted an abrupt drop in the outside air temperature reading, followed by disconnection of the autopilot and autothrust, along with the loss of speed



A JetStar A330 Airbus is parked at A.B. Won Pat Guam International Airport on Thursday, June 11, 2009. The plane made an emergency landing on Guam around 2 a.m. with more than 200 people on board. The aircraft was enroute from Osaka, Japan to Coolangatta, Australia when the crew requested an emergency landing on Guam after a small fire broke out in the cockpit, the airline said. Guam is a U.S. territory located 3,700 miles west of Hawaii.

Associated Press

and altitude information, the board said. The flight crew used backup instruments, and airspeed and altitude data were restored in about 5 minutes, the board said.

The board only recently became aware of the incident, but it confirmed the event through the Brazilian government.

Information on the second

incident is more sketchy, but it involves a Northwest Airlines flight from Hong Kong to Tokyo on Tuesday, the board said.

Data recorder information, aircraft condition monitoring system messages, crew statements and weather information involving that flight are being collected by NTSB investigators. □

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Politicians call for disgraced governor to resign

JIM DAVENPORT

Associated Press Writer

COLUMBIA, South Carolina (AP) — A day after his stunning confession that he cheated on his wife with a woman in Argentina, rumored presidential contender Gov. Mark Sanford sought to do damage control Thursday, while many politicians urged the South Carolina leader to resign.

Fellow Republicans issued sharp calls for the disgraced Sanford to step down — a move he indicated he was not considering. And at least one campaign donor was drafting a letter asking for his money back.

One county Republican leader said the governor “talked about how our leaders have stepped away from our core values, and said one thing on the campaign trail or out in the public and did something different in the background.” Sanford’s infidelity admission spells more trouble for the out-of-power Republican Party as it looks to rebound against the popular President Barack Obama and his emboldened



South Carolina Gov. Mark Sanford reacts to a question from the media as he leaves a family home Thursday, June 25, 2009, on Sullivan’s Island, S.C. The family is staying at the beach front property after the Governor admitted to having an affair with a woman from Argentina.

Associated Press

Democrats. The episode is another distraction for a party seeking a turnaround after disastrous losses in consecutive national elections as it struggles to identify a leader of stature to guide the party back to power.

Glenn McCall, a local representative to the Republican National Committee, said the Republican Party “can recover from this if we hold him accountable and the governor does the right thing and resigns for the sake of the party.”

Sanford emerged briefly Thursday from his family’s home on Sullivan’s Island, off the coast from Charleston, and rolled down the window of his car to talk. Asked if he planned to resign, he shook his head no.

Sanford also issued a statement promising to reimburse the state for an economic-development trip he took to Argentina last year that included time he spent with his mistress. State Commerce Department records indicate more than \$8,000 was spent on airfare, lodging and meals, though Sanford did not say how much he will pay back.

After disappearing to Buenos Aires for almost a week, Sanford returned Wednesday to reveal the affair and publicly

apologize to his wife and four sons, his supporters and constituents. He also resigned as chairman of the Republican Governors Association.

His emotional news conference had even harsh critics holding their fire, saying they were praying for the family to reconcile.

But the gloves started coming off Thursday as it became clear that Sanford had used state resources on at least one trade trip that included a tryst with his lover.

Sanford donor Al Hill of Dallas-based AG Hill Partners, an investment firm, was having a letter drafted Thursday requesting that money given to the governor’s campaign be immediately returned. The company gave \$3,500 for Sanford’s 2006 race.

Former Sen. Fred Thompson, who waged a failed Republican presidential bid last year, took Sanford to task on his Web site.

“I don’t have any sympathy in a situation where you’ve got a wife and four fairly young

kids ... don’t play it out in public,” Thompson said of Sanford, who had been seen as a potential candidate for the 2012 Republican presidential ticket.

Even the first lady, Jenny Sanford, seemed inclined to let her husband fend for himself, a departure for a woman who has served as his closest political adviser for years.

“His career is not a concern of mine. He’ll have to worry about that,” she told reporters as she drove away from the family’s beach house Thursday afternoon with children in the car. “I’m going to worry about my family and the character of my children. I’m going to take it a day at a time, and right now I am going out on the boat.” The state’s top senator questioned whether Sanford broke the law when he disappeared without transferring power to the lieutenant governor.

Sanford said he left his staff with the impression he was heading off for some solo hiking on the Appalachian Trail, a bogus story that they relayed to reporters who began asking where the governor had gone.

“I would think that if the evidence indicates that there is a willful effort to circumvent the constitution, I think there would be a chorus of calls for him to resign,” said state Sen. Glenn McConnell, a fellow Republican.

“It’s over. He ought to resign,” said Furman University political scientist Donald P. Aiesi. “First, he was derelict in his duty obviously. And secondly, if he’s going to make this marriage work, that needs to be his full-time job. He doesn’t need to be serving the people of South Carolina. He needs to serve his family.” Sanford, barred by state law from running again, leaves office in 2010. □

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Financier Stanford pleads not guilty, bond set

By JUAN A. LOZANO
Associated Press Writer

HOUSTON—Texas billionaire R. Allen Stanford pleaded not guilty Thursday to charges he swindled investors out of \$7 billion as part of a massive investment scam.

A federal magistrate set bond at \$500,000 but delayed Stanford's release until Friday to give prosecutors time to appeal her decision.

Two family members and a friend agreed to pay the bond, which includes \$100,000 in cash, set by U.S. Magistrate Frances Stacy.

Stanford entered his plea during his arraignment in federal court. The financier was indicted on charges that his international banking empire was really just a colossal Ponzi scheme.

Laura Pendergest-Holt, Gilberto Lopez and Mark Kuhrt, three executives with the now defunct Houston-based Stanford Financial Group who were indicted along with their former boss, also entered not guilty pleas.

At Stanford's bond hearing, prosecutors argued he should be held without bond because he might have access to billions of dollars in secret funds.

Prosecutor Paul Pelletier said investigators found a secret Swiss account Stanford controlled that was drained of more than \$100 million in December 2008.

Jeffrey Ferguson, a forensic examiner hired to review the records of Stanford Financial Group and its affiliated bank on the Caribbean island of Antigua, testified nearly \$1.2 billion of the \$7 billion Stanford and his co-defendants are accused of bilking from investors can't be accounted for.

In court documents filed Thursday, prosecutors also said Stanford faces a potential life sentence, has access to a private jet and has an international network of wealthy acquaintances who would help him, including one who recently agreed to give

him \$36,000 to pay his lease on a Houston apartment for a year.

Dick DeGuerin, Stanford's attorney, objected to Pelletier characterizing the account as secret, saying it was known to Stanford's employees.

"It's just wrong and it's designed to prejudice potential jurors who will hear this case," DeGuerin said.

DeGuerin argued in court documents that Stanford is not a flight risk and highlighted his charity efforts, including his work with a foundation for single mothers in Antigua, strong ties to his children and amicable relationships with the mothers of his kids as examples of his strong character.

Stanford has been in federal custody since he was arrested in Virginia on June 18.

Stanford denies allegations he defrauded investors, but tried to surrender to federal authorities in the months before his indictment was handed down last week. Authorities couldn't take him into custody until charges were filed.

Stanford was returned to Texas on Tuesday. He was being held in the Montgomery County Jail in Conroe, just north of Houston. He arrived in court in leg irons, handcuffs and an orange prison jumpsuit.

Each of the most serious counts that Stanford faces carry prison terms of up to 20 years. But prosecutors say sentencing guidelines could increase his total sentence to life in prison.

The billionaire and the executives are accused of orchestrating a massive fraud by misusing most of the \$7 billion they advised clients to invest in certificates of deposit from the Stanford International Bank, based on the Caribbean island of Antigua.

Also indicted is Leroy King, the former chief executive officer of Antigua's Financial Services Regulatory Commission. He was taken into custody by island authorities and will now face extradition

proceedings, according to a government official who spoke on condition of anonymity because she was not authorized to discuss the case. King is accused of accepting more than \$100,000 in bribes to turn a blind eye to irregularities. □

Billionaire R. Allen Stanford, center, is escorted from the federal courthouse Thursday, June 25, 2009 in Houston. Stanford faces federal charges that he ran a \$7 billion scheme to defraud investors with his international banking empire.

Associated Press



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HONDURAS LEADER Continued from Page B1

The crisis quickly ballooned when Zelaya fired Gen. Romeo Vasquez as head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff late Wednesday for refusing to support the referendum, which is intended to measure popular support for possible constitutional changes. Zelaya has not said what he wants, but critics accuse him

of trying to extend presidential terms before his ends in January, like his ally Hugo Chavez did in Venezuela. The Supreme court ordered Vasquez reinstated Thursday and warned Zelaya would face penal consequences if he does not respect the ruling. "We will not obey the Supreme Court," Zelaya told more than 2,000 cheering supporters

gathered in front of the presidential offices. "The court, which only imparts justice for the powerful, the rich and the bankers, only causes problems for democracy."

The top court, Congress and the attorney general say the vote is illegal because it would violate constitutional clauses barring some changes.

The president's dismissal of Vasquez prompted the chiefs of the army, navy and air force to resign.

The president himself announced Wednesday night that Defense Minister Edmundo Orellana had resigned.

Vasquez said he could not support a referendum that the courts had declared illegal, but he ruled out the possibility of a coup.

"We are prudent and we accept the decision of the president, whom we respect and who has the right to dismiss whom he wants," Vasquez said.

The Organization of American States called an emergency meeting Friday to discuss the

Honduras crisis.

The president's nonbinding referendum asks voters if they want a further, formal election on whether to call an assembly to write a new constitution.

Zelaya, who is close to Chavez and the Castro brothers in Cuba, has argued that Honduras' social problems are rooted in the 27-year-old constitution. Critics say Zelaya, like Chavez and other Latin American leaders, wants to expand presidential powers and remove limits on re-election.

Zelaya, a wealthy landowner owner grappling with rising food prices and a sharp spike in drug violence, is currently barred from seeking re-election when his four-year term ends in January.

"What you see is the growing delegitimizing of a president by a larger and growing group of leading elites, including the military," said Manuel Orozco, a political analyst with the Inter-American Dialogue, a Washington-based think tank. But Zelaya has tapped into

discontent among civil organization who see their chance to have greater influence in Honduran politics, Orozco said. And it will be hard to prevent the referendum from happening unless the military steps in directly, he added.

"This fragmentation of the political circles of power have given an opportunity to leverage the demands that civil society has, such as more freedom of expression in a country where the media is owned by a few families," Orozco said. "I think he has the upper hand right now. The army is uncertain as to whether they should prevent the referendum."

Earlier Thursday, the Supreme Court ordered police to remove all electoral material stored at the international airport in the capital, Tegucigalpa. After his speech, Zelaya and his supporters headed to the military base and took ballots and other materials out in military trucks and headed to an undisclosed location. □

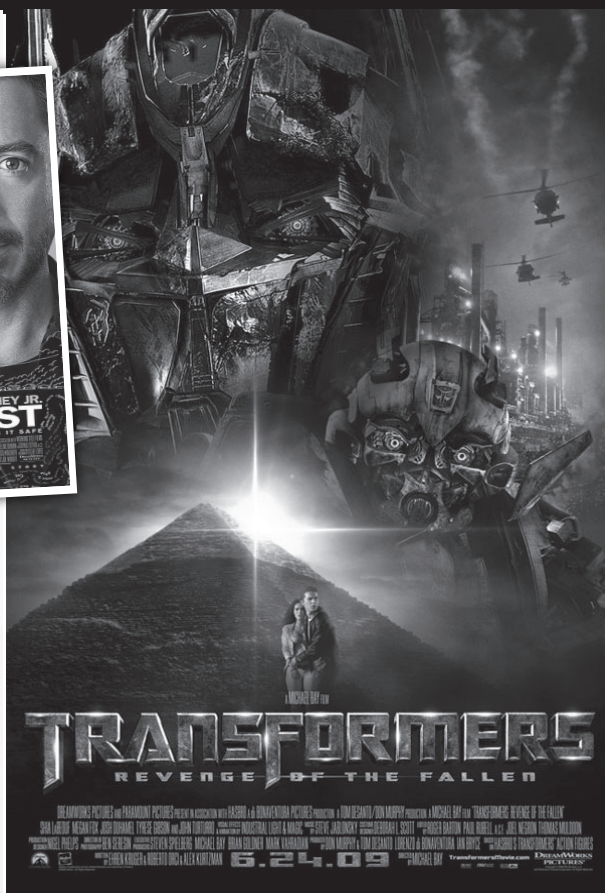
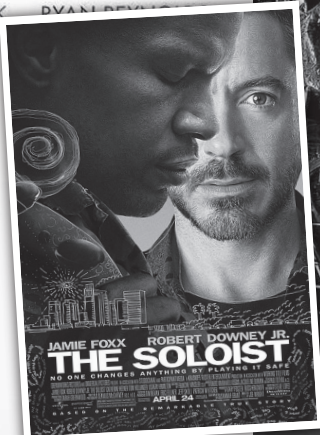


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PG	IMAGINE THAT			
	daily:	4.55	6.10	9.30
	matinee: 12.10	2.30	late show: 11.50	
PG-13	LAND OF THE LOST			
	daily:		9.00	
	matinee:		late show: 11.15	
R	THE TAKING OF PELHAM 123			
	daily:	5.15	7.30	9.45
	matinee: 12.40	3.00	late show: 11.55	
PG-13	YEAR ONE			
	daily:	5.50	8.00	10.05
	matinee: 1.30	3.40	late show: 12.10	
PG	UP 3D			3D
	daily:	4.45	6.50	
	matinee: 12.30	2.40	late show:	
	TERMINATOR SALVATION			
	daily:	5.45	8.15	
PG-13	matinee: 1.00	3.25	late show: 11.00	
AT PASEO HERENCIA				
PG-13	THE PROPOSAL			NEW
	daily:	4.30	6.45	9.00
	matinee: 12.05	2.20	late show: 11.15	
PG-13	THE SOLOIST			NEW
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	matinee: 12.55	3.20	late show: 11.00	
PG-13	LAND OF THE LOST			
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	matinee: 12.30	2.45	late show:	
R	THE TAKING OF PELHAM 123			
	daily:	5.30	7.45	10.00
	matinee: 12.55	3.10	late show: 12.10	
PG-13	IMAGINE THAT			
	daily:	4.10	6.30	7.45
	matinee: 1.55		late show: 11.20	
PG-13	YEAR ONE			
	daily:	5.50	8.00	10.00
	matinee: 1.30	3.40	late show: 12.10	



In this photo released by the Lebanese parliament media office, Lebanese majority leader lawmaker Saad Hariri, right, sits next to the Lebanese Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri, left, during a session for the election of the house speaker at the Lebanese Parliament building, in Beirut, Lebanon, Thursday, June 25, 2009. Lebanese lawmakers overwhelmingly re-elected the pro-Hezbollah parliament speaker Nabih Berri on Thursday despite the Iranian-backed militant group's recent election loss, signaling the political factions' determination to work together toward a unity government.

Associated Press

Lebanon parliament re-elects pro-Hezbollah speaker

ZEINA KARAM

Associated Press Writer

BEIRUT (AP) — Lebanese lawmakers overwhelmingly re-elected a pro-Hezbollah parliament speaker Thursday despite the Iranian-backed group's recent election loss, signaling that the political factions are moving toward a unity government. Lebanese leaders have been looking for a fresh start after a divisive election.

The June 7 vote brought victory for the Western-backed coalition which fought off a strong challenge from the militant group Hezbollah and its allies. But it also underscored the deep divisions among the Lebanese.

Re-electing Hezbollah ally Nabih Berri for a fifth consecutive term is expected to smooth the way for the formation of a new government in the coming weeks. Majority leader Saad Hariri is tipped to head it.

Hariri said picking Berri for the job "consolidates national unity and preserves civil peace."

The choice of Berri, a Shiite Muslim, respects Lebanon's sectarian power-sharing structure that calls for the speaker to be a Shiite, the prime minister a Sunni Muslim and the president a Maronite Catholic. Both Parliament and Cabinet are divided in half between Muslims and Christians.

Berri heads the Shiite Amal movement that together with Hezbollah control most of the Shiites' 27 seats in the 128-member legislature. He was the sole candidate for the post, which he has held since 1992.

Celebratory gunfire erupted across Beirut and in Shiite villages in south Lebanon after Berri was approved with 90 of the 127 votes cast. His supporters drove around the city waving green flags of his Amal party. A Berri rival was re-elected as his deputy. Security officials said later in the day that one woman died and 10 people were wounded by the gunfire. The woman died of a heart attack triggered when gunmen opened fire near her apartment, they said, speaking on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to talk to the media.

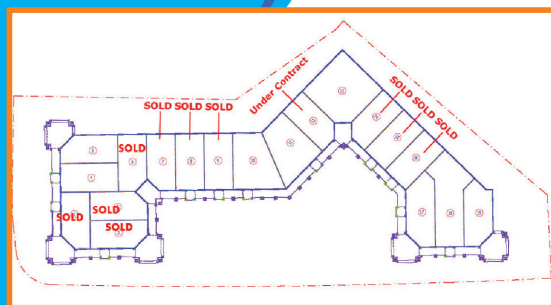
President Michel Suleiman's office later said the president would begin consultations with lawmakers on Friday about a prime minister-designate. The discussions are expected to last through Saturday. Since the June elections, politicians have been trying to move away from tensions and violence that bedeviled the country in the last four years, including assassinations of several legislators, sectarian street clashes and deep political paralysis. □

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Pakistan urges U.S. to end drone attacks

RYAN LUCAS

Associated Press Writer

ISLAMABAD (AP) — President Barack Obama's national security adviser reiterated the United States' strong support for Pakistan in its battle with Taliban militants during talks with senior Pakistani leaders on Thursday.

Islamabad, meanwhile, called for an end to U.S. missile attacks on its soil, two days after a suspected drone strike killed 80 people in the country's northwest.

Gen. James Jones discussed Washington's revamped strategy for the volatile region during talks with Pakistani military chief Gen. Ashfaq Parvez Kayani, Prime Minister Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani and President Asif Ali Zardari during his two-day visit to Islamabad.

He stressed that the two nations face a common battle against extremists.

"Terrorism is not simply the enemy of America — it is a direct and urgent threat to the Pakistani people," Jones said in a statement after meetings. The Obama administration has made the region a focus of its foreign policy, and is deploying an additional 21,000 troops to Afghanistan in an attempt to tame a growing Taliban insurgency there. Pakistan shares a long and porous border with Afghanistan and has its own problems with militants, and Washington views Islamabad's role as crucial to returning stability to the region.

Gilani, meanwhile, voiced concern that the beefed up U.S. presence in Afghanistan could send a new wave of Afghan refugees across the border, his office said in a statement.

Islamabad is already grappling with its own internal refugee problem and would likely be ill-equipped to handle a new influx of people. Some 2 million Pakistanis have been forced from their homes by the army's offensive against Taliban militants in the Swat Valley, northwest of the capital.

With the operation in Swat



Visiting U.S. National Security Adviser James Jones, second from left, listens to Pakistani Interior Minister Rehman Malik, second from right, who is overseeing the anti-Taliban operation, with U.S. Ambassador in Pakistan Anne Patterson, left, and Pakistani Defense Minister Ahmed Mukhtar at the Prime Minister house in Islamabad, Pakistan on Thursday, June 25, 2009.

winding down, Pakistan's military is gearing up for a new campaign in South Waziristan, where heavily armed tribesmen hold sway and al-Qaida and Taliban leaders are believed to be hiding.

Suspected militant hide-outs in South Waziristan have been pounded for more than a week with bombs and artillery as the military softens up targets in apparent preparation for a ground offensive.

In the latest violence, helicopter gunships attacked a seminary in Lehra village in the Kurram tribal area, killing at least five militants, local government official Mohammad Yasin said.

Washington strongly supports both campaigns, viewing them as a test of nuclear-armed Pakistan's resolve to confront a growing insurgency after years of halfhearted offensives and peace deals with militants. The battle in the tribal region could also help the war in Afghanistan because the area has been used by militants to launch cross-border attacks on U.S. and other troops.

Jones called the Pakistani government's push against militants "tremendous confidence-builders for the future."

"That translates into popular support in the United States for

what the government is trying to do, what the army is trying to do, and it obviously helps us in our overall fight," Jones said in an interview broadcast on

Express 24/7 television. "It's a very, very important moment right now, it's a strategic moment, and the relationship is definitely (moving) in the

10 die in flooding in eastern Czech Republic

PRAGUE (AP) — Flooding in the eastern Czech Republic after heavy rains has killed at least 10 people, Prime Minister Jan Fischer and officials said Thursday.

Fischer said five people drowned while four others died of health problems while rescuers were struggling to reach them.

The four all had heart problems, rescue authorities said. Another man drowned in the town of Novy Jicin, police spokeswoman Miroslava Salkova said later Thursday. Hundreds of people have been evacuated throughout the region and a number of roads and railway lines, including a major track that connects the capital Prague with the eastern Czech Republic and Poland, have been closed as rivers flood their banks.

The country's security council and the government met Thursday to assess the situation. Fischer expressed



A woman pushes her bicycle through a flooded street in Jeseník nad Odrou, Czech Republic, Thursday, June 25, 2009. Several people have drowned in flooding that has hit the eastern Czech Republic after heavy rains, officials said Thursday and hundreds of people have been evacuated throughout the region and a number of roads and railway lines have been closed as rivers flooded their banks.

Associated Press

his sympathy to the people in the affected area.

He said up to 1,000 soldiers will be deployed to help.

Meteorologists expect thunderstorms in the region later in the day but they are not expected to cause more damage. "There's no imminent

right direction."

Jones' visit comes two days after one of the deadliest attacks by suspected U.S. missiles on Pakistani soil that killed 80 people in the northwest. Gilani called for an end to such strikes "in order to ensure (the) success of Pakistan's strategy for isolating the militants from the tribes," the statement said.

Militant leaders have been targeted in dozens of strikes in the past two years from U.S. drones, high-tech, remote control planes used for both surveillance and to fire Hellfire missiles. The U.S. military concedes it uses drones in Pakistan, but never comments on the strikes.

Pakistan has loudly disapproved of the attacks because they involve the use of force by a foreign government on its soil and sometimes kill innocents and are highly unpopular among the Pakistani public. □

danger," Fischer said. "The situation is under control."

The situation remained tense in neighboring Austria Thursday, where driving rain over the past few days caused major flooding in northern, central and eastern parts of the country. □

Lukashenko: Belarus wants close ties with Europe

YURAS KARMANAU

Associated Press Writer

MINSK, Belarus (AP) —

The Belarusian president accused Russia on Thursday of trying to subdue his nation through trade sanctions and said Belarus will seek closer economic ties with Europe.

Alexander Lukashenko said in televised comments that a recent Russian ban on the import of dairy products from Belarus had hurt ties between the two ex-Soviet neighbors. The move dealt a heavy blow to Belarus' agricultural sector, which employs one out of ten Belarusians.

"They wanted to inflict the maximum pain," Lukashenko

said of the Russian move, which he cast as part of Moscow's efforts to win control over Belarusian milk factories.

Russia and Belarus have an accord envisaging close political, economic and military ties, and they declared a joint goal of building a single state. But Lukashenko has resisted Russian attempts to take control of key Belarusian industrial assets, and he has criticized Russia for trying to strong-arm his nation.

The Russian ban on Belarusian dairy products was lifted last week, but a potentially more troubling energy conflict looms.

Lukashenko said Thursday that Russian oil companies were pushing to control Belarusian oil refineries. He said his government is ready to discuss offers if they are fair.

Belarus is desperate for cash, as the global financial crisis has drained its hard-currency reserves. Russia agreed to lend Belarus \$2 billion, but the transfer of the final \$500 installment has been held up indefinitely.

Lukashenko said his nation needs to build up ties with the European Union because of Russian attempts to control Belarus.

"They are putting pressure



In this Sunday, June 22, 2008, file photo Russia's President Dmitry Medvedev, right, and his Belarus counterpart Alexander Lukashenko tour the the 19-century built Brest Fortress, where in 1941 Red Army garrison held the line against the Nazi Germany's Army attack for over a month, southwest of Belarusian capital Minsk.

Associated Press

Kosovo ex-prime minister released from detention

SOFIA, Bulgaria (AP) — A Bulgarian court released Kosovo's former prime minister Thursday, two days after he was detained on an international arrest warrant issued by Serbia for alleged war crimes.

The district court in the western city of Kyustendil decided to release Agim Ceku from custody. The ruling can be appealed within three days and, pending completion of the legal process, Ceku must remain available to Bulgarian authorities.

Upon his release, Ceku told reporters that Serbia's arrest warrant lacked grounds and said Serbia has no jurisdiction over Kosovo and its institutions.

"The international institutions have probed the situation, must have examined Serbia's claims against me and no charges have ever been pressed against me," he said. Ceku, a former rebel commander who was prime minister of Kosovo between 2006 and 2008, is wanted in Serbia for allegedly committing war crimes during the 1998-1999 fighting in Kosovo between ethnic Albanian rebels and Serb government forces. He was taken into custody while entering Bulgaria from



Kosovo's Prime Minister Agim Ceku, speaks during an interview with The Associated Press in Kosovo's capital Pristina, in this Feb. 3, 2007 file photo.

Macedonia late Tuesday.

Serbian Justice Minister Snezana Malovic said Wednesday that Serbia has filed an extradition request for Ceku with the Bulgarian authorities.

Ceku was traveling to Bulgaria at the invitation of the Atlantic Club, a non-governmental organization, to lobby for NATO membership, the club's honorary president and Bulgaria's former Foreign Minister Solomon Pasi said. The Interpol warrant was suspended when Ceku gained

immunity after being named prime minister in 2006, but was renewed by Serbia after Ceku took part in a conference on the demobilization of guerrilla movements in Colombia earlier this year.

He was held overnight in prisons in Slovenia in 2003 and Hungary in 2004 after his name appeared on lists of wanted persons.

Kosovo declared independence last year and was recognized by the United States and most European Union nations — including □

Associated Press



on us at the Russian market, forcing us to search for other markets," he said.

Earlier this week, Lukashenko hosted EU External Relations Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner, who said the European Union stands ready to expand cooperation with Belarus.

The EU this year formed a so-called "Eastern Partnership" with Belarus and five other former Soviet republics,

offering closer economic and political ties in exchange for a commitment to democracy.

Belarus was invited to join after it freed all political prisoners, allowed the opposition to participate in elections and allowed two independent newspapers to operate.

Despite the goodwill, Ferrero-Waldner said Monday that Belarus still had some way to go to meet Western democratic standards. □

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Blockbuster: Cavs acquire Shaq from Suns



FILE - In this Feb. 18, 2006, file photo, Miami Heat's Shaquille O'Neal, right, talks with Cleveland Cavaliers' LeBron James during East All-Star basketball practice during the NBA All-Star Jam Session at the George R. Brown Convention Center in Houston. The Cleveland Cavaliers completed a blockbuster trade on Thursday, June 25, 2009, bringing superstar center Shaquille O'Neal from the Phoenix Suns to play with current MVP LeBron James, two people with knowledge of the deal told The Associated Press. The people spoke on condition of anonymity because the trade had not been officially announced.

Associated Press

TOM WITHERS

AP Sports Writer

CLEVELAND (AP) — NBA superstars LeBron James and Shaquille O'Neal became teammates when the Cleveland Cavaliers completed a blockbuster trade for O'Neal from the Phoenix Suns on Thursday.

The Cavaliers hope they are creating a basketball duo with the drawing power of Michael Jordan and Scottie Pippen, Magic Johnson and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar — or even Shaq and Kobe Bryant.

Each of those pairs won multiple NBA titles. The Cavaliers would settle for their first.

The Cavaliers are sending center Ben Wallace and Serbian swingman Sasha Pavlovic to the Suns, along with a second-round pick in

the 2010 draft and cash.

"It is a really unique and rare opportunity to bring in a player of Shaq's caliber. We are excited to see how his presence, experience and play positively impacts our team," Cavaliers general manager Danny Ferry said.

O'Neal has won four championships during his 17-year career — three as member of the Los Angeles Lakers with Bryant and one in Miami with Dwyane Wade — and will now try to get yet another with James, the league's reigning MVP, who is missing only an NBA title from his personal resume.

The trade is a gamble for the Cavaliers.

They are hoping that the 37-year-old O'Neal, who is past his prime and has one year and \$21 million left on his contract, can be the missing piece that helps James deliver his first championship to a city that has waited since 1964 for one of its NBA, NFL or Major League Baseball teams to win it all.

"This move and our goals are aligned with what our players want, including LeBron, to win a championship and win it this year," Ferry said. "We don't want to be patient." For sheer star power, the O'Neal-James tandem rivals any on the American sports landscape. But it could also be a one-year gambit.

Ferry and Suns GM Steve Kerr have been discussing the deal for months and finally reached a preliminary agreement early Thursday. The teams had to get league approval before the swap could be announced. They made the trade official in the afternoon.

James could have used Shaq during this year's playoffs. The Cavaliers' frontcourt of Wallace, Zydrunas Ilgauskas and Anderson Varejao couldn't contain Orlando center Dwight

Howard, and Cleveland and lost in the Eastern Conference finals — a devastating blow for a team that won 66 games in the regular season and coasted through the first two playoff rounds without losing a game.

O'Neal is coming off an All-Star season with the Suns — averaging 17.8 points and 8.4 rebounds in 75 games — but doesn't move as well as he once did and slowed Phoenix's high-powered offense. Still, the 7-foot-1, 325-pound (2.16-meter, 148-kilogram) center is large enough to take on a player like Howard by himself.

The Cavaliers' urgency to win a title is greater than ever with James entering his final season before he can opt out of his contract. The 24-year-old came up short this season and stormed off the floor after being eliminated in Orlando without shaking hands with any of the Magic players, including Howard, his U.S. Olympic teammate.

Cleveland can offer James an extension this summer, but there's no guarantee the local star, who has always maintained he wants to stay in his home state, will sign it.

Bringing in O'Neal may soothe James' concerns that the Cavaliers wouldn't be able to get him enough help to make a run at numerous titles. Ferry still wants to re-sign Varejao this summer and may look to add another perimeter player through a trade or free agency.

The trade gives the Suns financial flexibility in the future. All told, they will save \$10 million.

The 34-year-old Wallace, who after the season said he may retire, is in the final year of a \$14 million deal and the Suns plan to buy out Pavlovic, who has \$1.5 million of his \$4.95 million contract guaranteed.

Daniel Alves scores late as Brazil knocks out host

STUART CONDIE

AP Sports Writer

JOHANNESBURG (AP)

— Daniel Alves scored with two minutes left Thursday to give Brazil a 1-0 win over South Africa and a place in the Confederations Cup final against the United States.

South Africa had unsettled Brazil with a frantic hustling game of quick challenges and tight marking from a packed midfield and attentive defense, but the substitute right back curled in a shot from the edge of the area to give his team a chance of a record third title after Ramires tumbled right on the edge of the area under a challenge from South Africa captain Aaron Mokoena.

South Africa had displayed far more energy and guile than Brazil and was denied a famous victory only by the



Brazil's Daniel Alves scores a goal from a free kick during their Confederations Cup semifinal soccer match against South Africa at Ellis Park Stadium in Johannesburg, South Africa, Thursday, June 25, 2009. Brazil won 1-0 and advanced to the final.

Associated Press

lack of a finishing touch up front. In Sunday's final at Ellis Park, the Brazilians will face the United States, which upset European champion Spain 2-0 Wednesday.

Just four days after routing World Cup holder Italy 3-0, Brazil looked short of ideas and labored in its efforts to find an opening — largely trying to play through the middle.

MLB Roundup

Santana leads Mets over Cardinals 3-2

NEW YORK (AP) — Johan Santana bested Chris Carpenter in a matchup of former pitchers of the year as the New York Mets beat the St. Louis Cardinals 3-2 on Thursday to win their first series in nearly three weeks. Nick Evans hit a two-run double in a three-run fourth inning for the Mets, who gave up an unearned run in the first and then rallied to take three of four from the National League Central leader. Santana (9-5), the American League Cy Young Award winner in 2004 and 2006, gave up two runs — one earned — and seven hits in seven innings. Carpenter (5-2), the NL Cy Young winner in 2005, gave up three runs and four hits in seven innings.

Tigers 6, Cubs 5

At Detroit, Magglio Ordonez ended a career-long, 40-game home run drought by slamming the go-ahead shot, leading Detroit to its season-best seventh straight victory. Ordonez connected for a two-run homer in the fourth inning off Ted Lilly (7-5), who allowed six runs and 10 hits in six innings and lost for the first time in a month.

Armando Galarraga (4-7) won for the first time since April 26.

Astros 5, Royals 4

At Houston, Lance Berkman homered twice and drove in four runs to help Houston overcome an error-filled day

and beat Kansas City.

Berkman entered the game needing to drive in one run to become the third player in team history to reach 1,000 RBIs. He did it on his first at-bat, a two-run shot to far left field that gave Houston a 2-1 lead.

The win prevented the Royals from sweeping the Astros for the first time in their eight-series history.

Twins 6, Brewers 4

At Milwaukee, Denard Span tripled, walked three times and scored three runs in his first game back from the disabled list as Minnesota earned its fifth win in six games against Milwaukee this season.

Joe Crede hit his 11th home run and Scott Baker (5-6) went six innings, holding the Brewers scoreless until Casey McGehee and Prince Fielder homered in the sixth. Baker has won his last three decisions and hasn't given up more than three runs in his last five outings.

Milwaukee's Mike Burns (0-1) made his first career start, giving up four runs and six

hits over 5 2-3 innings.

White Sox 6, Dodgers 5, 13 innings

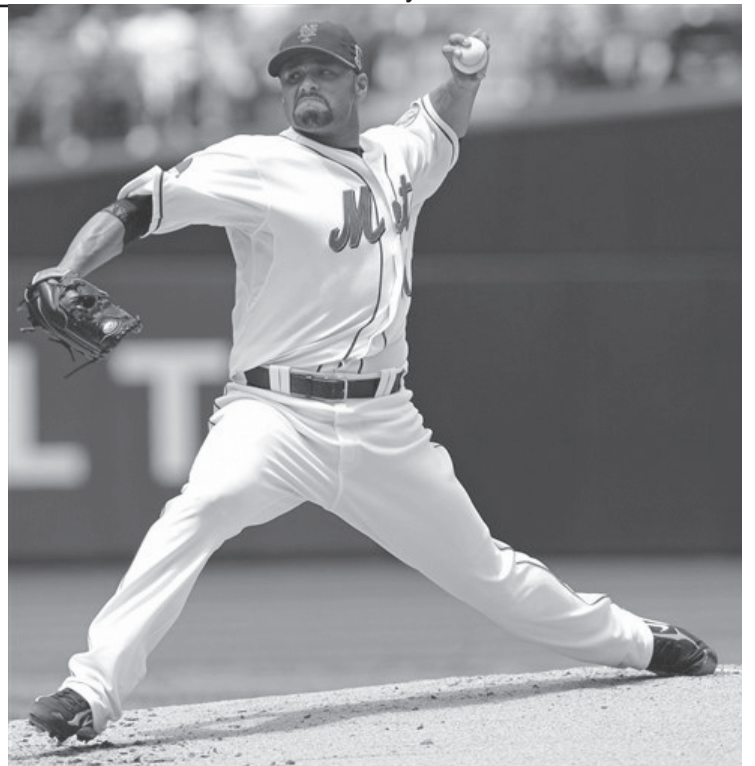
At Chicago, Scott Podsednik lined a two-out RBI single in front of diving center fielder Matt Kemp in the 13th inning to give Chicago consecutive home victories for the first time since May 22-23.

Podsednik's hit came against Jeff Weaver (4-2) with the bases loaded.

Mariners 9, Padres 3

At Seattle, Ichiro Suzuki lined the 29th leadoff homer of his career into the right-field seats and finished a triple short of the cycle as Seattle gave starter Jarrod Washburn his first win in more than two months.

Suzuki hit the third pitch from San Diego starter Wade LeBlanc (0-1) for his sixth homer of the season. He added a double in the second and single in the fourth, but grounded out and reached on an infield hit in his final two at-bats. It was his third four-hit game of the season as the Mariners finally gave Washburn (4-5) some run support. □



New York Mets starter Johan Santana throws a pitch in the first inning of a baseball game against the St. Louis Cardinals at Citi Field in New York, on Thursday, June 25, 2009.

Associated Press



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Venus beats Bondarenko, Hewitt wins at Wimbledon

STEVEN WINE

AP Sports Writer

WIMBLEDON, England (AP) — Even on one good leg, Venus Williams is tough to beat at Wimbledon.

The five-time champion wore a strap on her left knee Thursday but still advanced to the third round by beating Kateryna Bondarenko of Ukraine 6-3, 6-2. In the men's draw, No. 5 Juan Martin del Potro of Argentina became the highest seed to be eliminated so far, losing in straight sets to Lleyton Hewitt of Australia. Tournament favorite Williams has been hampered by knee trouble in the past, but there was no indication of a problem this week until she walked onto sunny Court 1 bandaged from mid-calf to mid-thigh. Williams let out a yelp when she appeared to pull up on a backhand in the third game, perhaps because of the knee. Otherwise she moved across the grass freely, charging forward to pounce on short balls. She won 17 points at the net to two for Bondarenko. Williams was coy about the reason for the tape.

"Just for support," she said twice in response to questions. Pressed about what was wrong with her knee, she said: "What happened was that I needed some support, and then I went and got the support, and then I wore it in the match. I'll be wearing it in doubles, too. So it's working out. I mean, I think all the players might start wearing it because it's so

supportive."

Her mother and coach, Oracene Price, declined to discuss the matter. Williams wore the strap again later when she and sister Serena beat Virginie Razzano and Aravane Rezai in doubles, 6-3, 6-3.

In men's play, two-time runner-up Andy Roddick lost serve only once and defeated Igor Kunitsyn 6-4, 6-2, 3-6, 6-2.

"It was comfortable most of the time," Roddick said. "I played my best set by far in the fourth set."

Roddick will next play No. 26 Jurgen Melzer, the Wimbledon boys champion in 1999.

Hewitt, who won Wimbledon in 2002, beat del Potro 6-3, 7-5, 7-5 to break an 11-match losing streak against top-five players.

"I love playing in England," said the Australian, who was cheered on by an often raucous group of yellow-clad Australian fans on Centre Court. "It feels like a second home, really."

Hewitt was broken for the first time when serving for the match at 5-4 in the third set, but broke right back. He then double-faulted on his first match point in the next game before del Potro sent a shot long on the second.

Del Potro has a history of struggling on grass, and also lost in the second round the previous two years at Wimbledon.

No. 3 Andy Murray, trying to become the first British man



Lleyton Hewitt of Australia celebrates match point against Juan Martin Del Potro of Argentina during their second round singles match at Wimbledon, Thursday, June 25, 2009.

since 1936 to win Wimbledon, defeated Ernests Gulbis 6-2, 7-5, 6-3.

Fabrice Santoro, who plans to retire at the end of the year, was eliminated from his 14th Wimbledon when he lost to former No. 1 Juan Carlos Ferrero, 6-7 (1), 6-3, 6-4, 6-3. Joining Williams in the women's third round was French Open champion Svetlana Kuznetsova, who

beat Pauline Parmentier 6-1, 6-3 in 59 minutes. The Roland Garros runner-up, top-ranked Dinara Safina, never faced a break point and beat Rossana de Los Rios 6-3, 7-5.

Last year's French Open winner, No. 13-seeded Ana Ivanovic, beat Sara Errani 7-5, 6-1. No. 17 Amelie Mauresmo, the 2006 Wimbledon champion, beat Kristina Kucova 6-3, 6-3. No. 18 Samantha Stosur,

a Roland Garros semifinalist this month, swept the last five games to beat qualifier Tatjana Malek 4-6, 7-6 (6), 6-4.

Safina and Kuznetsova criticized the court assignments. Kuznetsova was on Court 3, while Safina and former No. 1-ranked players Ivanovic, Mauresmo and Jelena Jankovic were also on smaller courts.

"Of course it's not fair," Safina said. "Hopefully next match I'll play on bigger court."

The only women's match on Centre Court was ninth-seeded Caroline Wozniacki win over Maria Kirilenko.

"I'm fine to put me wherever they want," Kuznetsova said.

"They don't have to put me Centre Court. But with the schedule, this is little bit weird thing. ... But, you know, in Wimbledon you have to expect anything."

Jankovic, seeded sixth, beat Iveta Benesova 6-2, 6-4.

The No. 3-seeded Williams lost only six points on her serve, two on double-faults. She slammed three aces in her first service game and finished with six.

She was just as ferocious with her returns. When one serve came at Williams slower than a lorry on the motorway, she eagerly stepped into the court, took a lusty swing and hit a winner.

That took her to set point in the first set, and she whacked another big return on the next point to win the set. There was no letup from there, and she swept the final four games. □

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Singer Gloria Estefan, left, and her husband Emilio Estefan, right, receive jerseys from Miami Dolphins owner Stephen M. Ross during a news conference announcing that the Estefans are joining the Miami Dolphins football team as minority owners, Thursday June. 25, 2009, at Landshark Stadium in Miami.

Associated Press

MLB cooperates with fed probe into Ramirez's drug

NEW YORK (AP) — Major League Baseball is cooperating with a federal investigation into where star batter Manny Ramirez got the performance-enhancing drug that resulted in his 50-game suspension.

The Drug Enforcement Administration is checking whether a doctor in Miami and his son were the source of the drug, ESPN reported on Thursday.

MLB president Bob DuPuy confirmed that its department of investigations was working with the DEA. MLB had no additional comment on the probe.

Ramirez was suspended in May for violating MLB's doping rules and can rejoin the Los Angeles Dodgers on July 3.

The slugging outfielder is playing three games this week with the Dodgers' Triple-A affiliate in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

ESPN said investigators suspect the prescription for HCG, or human chorionic gonadotropin, was written by Pedro Publio Bosch, a doctor in Florida since 1976. His son, Anthony Bosch, supposedly worked as a go-between for the doctor and Ramirez, ESPN said.

HCG was added to MLB's banned substances list last year. It is popular among users of performance-enhancing drugs because it can lessen the side effects of ending a cycle of steroids. □

Sandra Gal leads by one in LPGA event

ROCHESTER, New York (AP) — Germany's Sandra Gal shoots an 8-under 64 and leads by one stroke during the darkness-suspended first-round at the Wegmans LPGA.

Play was interrupted for 3 hours by an afternoon storm on Thursday, then called off for the day in near darkness with dozens of players unable to finish their round.

Gal's career-best round was one better than Jiyai Shin of South Korea. Becky Lucidi was in third place at 6 under through 15 holes.

Tiger Woods' 18-year-old niece, Cheyenne, carded a 75 in her pro tour debut, which came courtesy of a sponsor exemption.

The 24-year-old Gal, in her second year on tour, finished with a 15-foot birdie putt. Her best finish was a tie for fifth at last month's Corning Classic. □



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Presidente Honduras destituye a jefe militar antes de consulta

TEGUCIGALPA (Reuters) - El presidente de Honduras, Manuel Zelaya, destituyó al más alto jefe militar del país y aceptó la renuncia del ministro de Defensa, luego de que las fuerzas armadas se rehusaron a movilizar urnas para una consulta popular convocada por el mandatario para el domingo.

Zelaya dijo la noche del miércoles que destituyó al jefe del Estado Mayor Conjunto de las fuerzas armadas, el general Romeo Vásquez, y que aceptó la dimisión del ministro de Defensa, Edmundo Orellana, después de una reunión en la casa presidencial con jefes militares.

Bachelet:

Hay espacio para ampliar TLC con México

MEXICO (AP) - La presidenta de Chile Michelle Bachelet destacó el jueves que Las exportaciones e inversiones entre México y Chile han aumentado considerablemente tras la firma del Tratado de Libre Comercio (TLC) entre ambas naciones y abogó por una ampliación del acuerdo.

La mandataria, de visita oficial en este país, señaló que en estos tiempos de crisis financiera los dos países deben redoblar sus esfuerzos para mejorar las condiciones económicas de su población, con respeto al medioambiente.

“Hemos creado los instrumentos básicos para que sigamos trabajando en el intercambio de conocimientos y experiencias y es evidente que aún hay mucho espacio para crecer”, manifestó la presidenta en un acto

El mandatario dijo que tomó la decisión “ante la crisis generada por algunos sectores que han promovido la desestabilización y el caos, con el fin de causar serios problemas a la institucionalidad democrática de Honduras”.

Previamente, Zelaya había advertido el miércoles que el estado de derecho en el país se estaba “poniendo en precario”, en medio de una agria disputa con políticos opositores que rechazan la consulta convocada por el mandatario para reformar la constitución y establecer la reelección presidencial.

Los opositores, incluyendo a

líderes del Partido Liberal de Zelaya, acusan al mandatario de querer perpetuarse en el poder imitando a su actual aliado, el presidente venezolano Hugo Chávez. Zelaya reivindica su derecho de consultar a la ciudadanía sobre cualquier tema.

Un líder de un partido minoritario de izquierda denunció una amenaza de golpe de estado militar contra el mandatario, instigado por políticos opositores que temen que Zelaya busque mantenerse en el poder más allá del 27 de enero, cuando termina su gestión de cuatro años.

El líder del izquierdista Partido Unificación Democrática (UD), César Ham, que respalda la consulta, dijo el miércoles que “lo más preocupante es que hemos visto hoy algunas amenazas de golpes de estado contra el presidente (Manuel) Zelaya”. Otros jefes militares renunciaron en solidaridad con Vásquez.

Zelaya llamó a organizaciones populares y a pobladores a una reunión al mediodía del jueves en la casa de gobierno “para tomar decisiones en pro del desarrollo y de la democracia hondureña”.

con empresarios de los dos países para celebrar el 10° aniversario del acuerdo comercial bilateral.

Según Bachelet, desde la vigencia del TLC el intercambio comercial entre México y Chile ha crecido un 269%. □

Ecuador: imponen nueva multa a televisora de oposición

QUITO (AP) - La estación de televisión Teleamazonas confirmó el jueves que recibió una segunda multa de la Superintendencia de Telecomunicaciones, del estado, por haber transmitido una noticia basada en supuestos, según las autoridades.

El abogado de ese medio, Pablo Ortiz, confirmó a la AP que se trata de una sanción económica de 40 dólares, “lo máximo previsto en la ley”. El monto corresponde a lo que está estipulado en la ley aplicada, que data de 1975.

Añadió que si hay una tercera sanción, por reincidencia, “podrían imponer hasta 90 días de suspensión”.

La primera falta cometida por el canal, considerado por el gobierno como de oposición, fue a inicios de junio por haber transmitido escenas taurinas en un horario no permitido. Eso causó entonces una multa de 20 dólares. Según

la resolución de la Superintendencia de Telecomunicaciones, por un segundo caso, el canal transmitió una noticia “basada en supuestos al mencionar la existencia de un ‘Centro Clandestino’ del Consejo Nacional Electoral”, en los comicios generales del 26 de abril.

El 6 de junio, el Consejo Nacional de Radiodifusión y Televisión (Conartel), estatal, había abierto un segundo proceso por este caso lo que determinó una sanción de 40 dólares.

El organismo estatal inició el proceso administrativo de juzgamiento porque consideró que esa noticia estaba basada en supuestos y que podía causar “conmoción nacional”.

En un editorial, leído la noche del miércoles por un locutor, la televisora afirmó que “Teleamazonas, como todo medio de comunicación, puede cometer errores sin que, el reconocerlos, signifique que en el futuro no redoblará

esfuerzos para que no se produzcan”. Explicó que tal información “adoleció de algunas imprecisiones, producto de las limitaciones y urgencias que se tiene al momento de transmitir y narrar hechos en vivo”.

Pidió a la Asamblea (legislatura) que modifique las leyes que rigen las labores de los medios de comunicación, que datan de la época de la dictadura de la década de 1970, y que las dejen “en concordancia con las nuevas disposiciones constitucionales sobre esta materia” generadas en la asamblea constituyente del 2008.

Teleamazonas enfrenta una tercera investigación, que si termina en sanción podría significar su cierre definitivo, a causa de una noticia en la que señaló que las operaciones de explotación de gas en el golfo de Guayaquil, que ejecuta la empresa venezolana PDVSA, podría alejar la pesca por seis meses, perjudicando con ello a los pobladores de ese sector. □



Foto de archivo del presidente de Honduras, Manuel Zelaya, durante una conferencia de prensa en Tegucigalpa, 18 mayo 2009. Zelaya, destituyó al más alto jefe militar del país y aceptó la renuncia del ministro de Defensa, luego de que las fuerzas armadas se rehusaron a movilizar urnas para una consulta popular convocada por el mandatario para el domingo. REUTERS/Edgard Garrido





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